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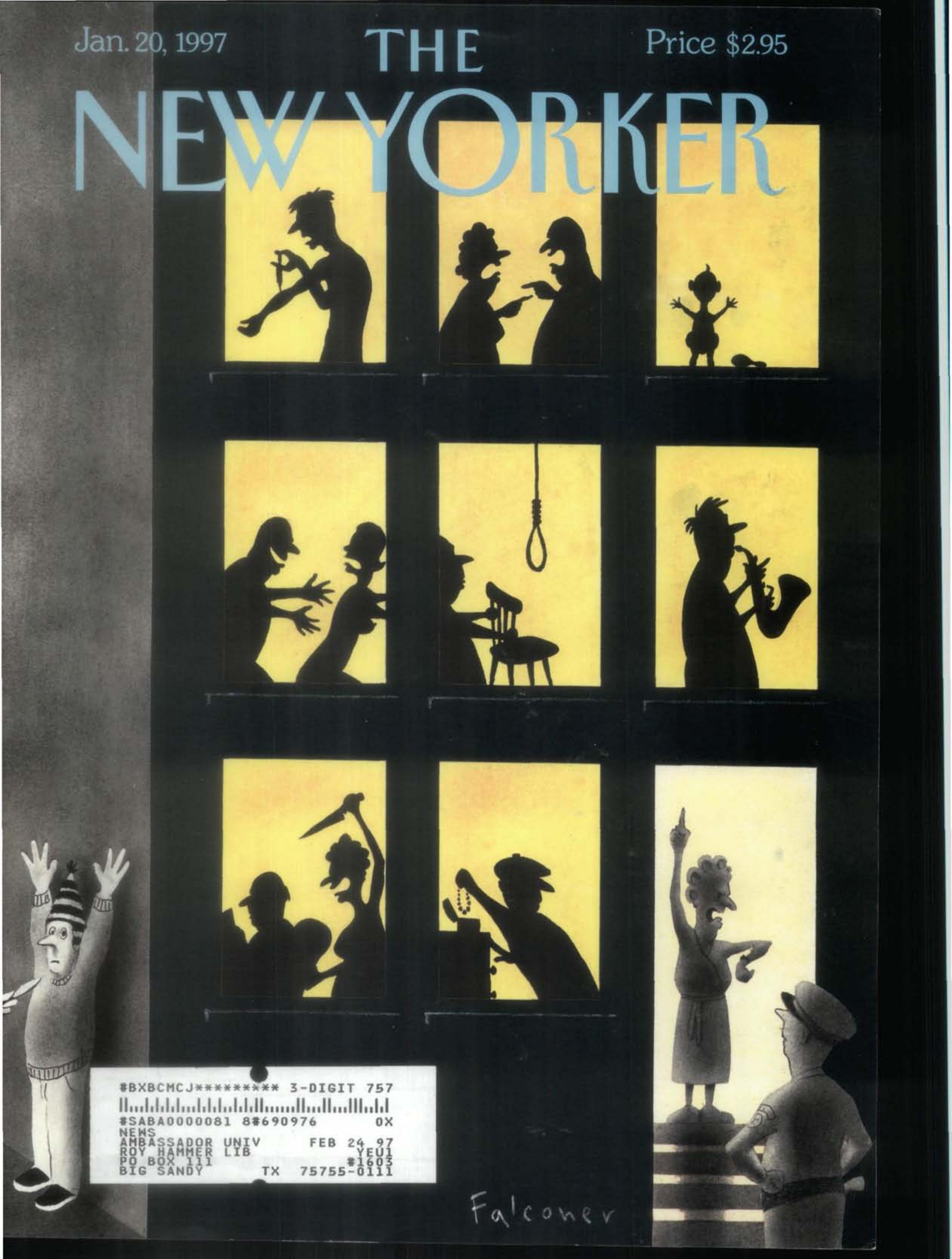

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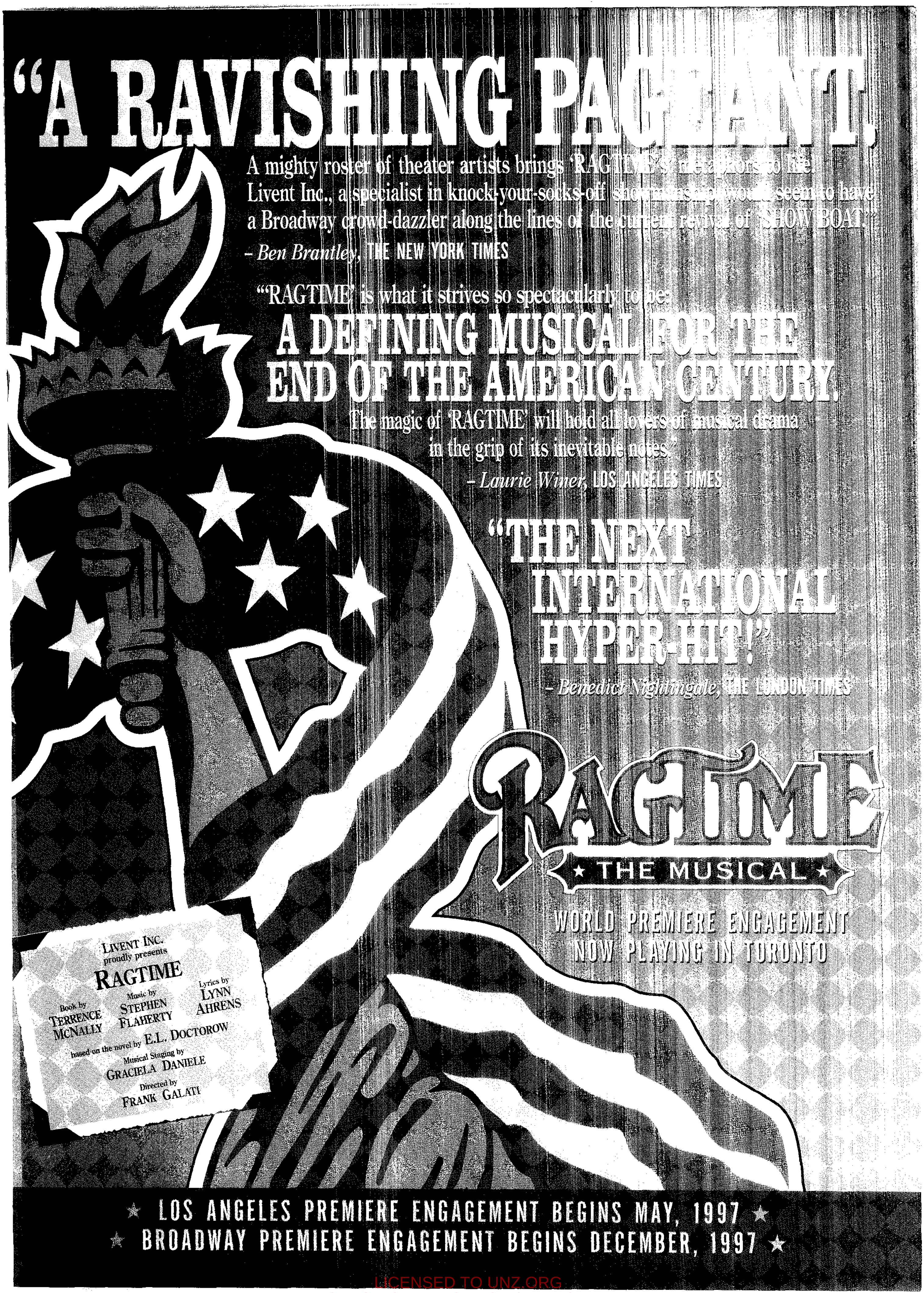

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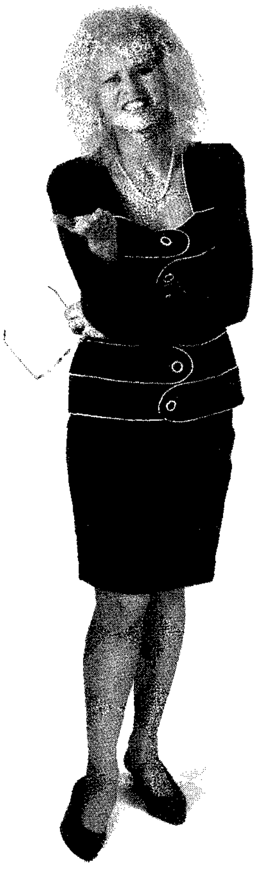

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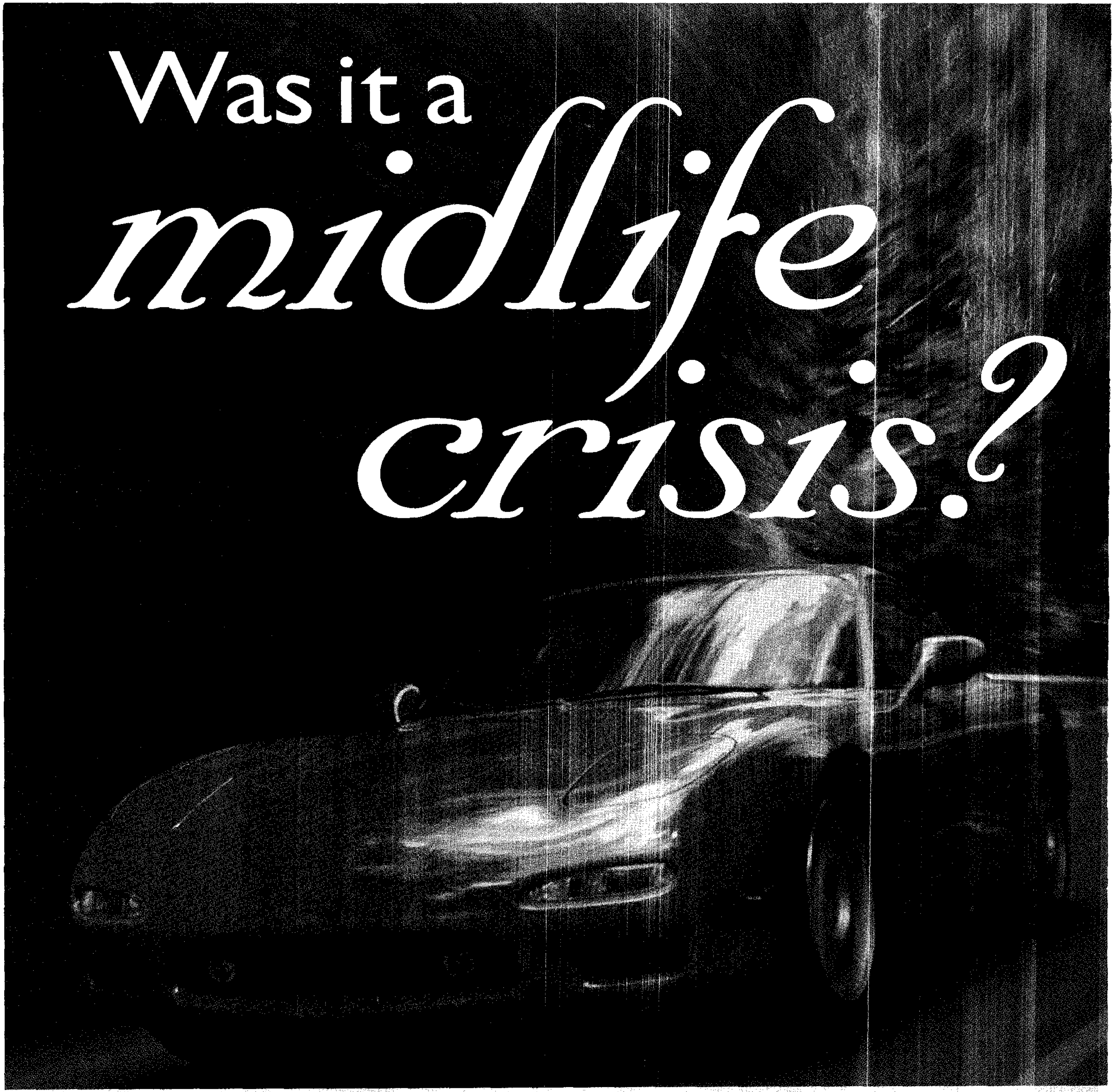

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COMMENT

CHIP THRILLS

There's more to TV than V. There's also T.

ANYONE who stands on a New York City subway platform on a hot summer day experiences what the historian Edward Tenner has called a rearranging effect. Subway platforms seem as if they ought to be cool places, since they are underground and are shielded from the sun. Actually, they're anything but. Come summer, they can be as much as ten degrees hotter than the street above, in part because the air-conditioners inside subway cars pump out so much hot air that they turn the rest of the subway system into an oven. In other words, we need air-conditioners on subway cars because air-conditioners on subway cars have made stations so hot that subway cars need to be air-conditioned. It's a bit like the definition the Viennese writer Karl Kraus famously gave of psychoanalysis: "the disease of which it purports to be the cure."

Not all technological advances result in this kind of problem, of course. But it happens often enough so that when someone comes along making spectacular claims in behalf of a new technology—the way, for example, parents' groups, television executives, and politicians are now jumping up and down in excitement over the so-called V-chip—it's worth asking whether that technology really solves the problem or simply rearranges the hot air from the car to the platform.

The V-chip, as is well known, is the little piece of computer hardware that, by law, will be put inside every new television receiver, beginning perhaps as early as next year. Parents will push the V-chip button on their remote, punch in a password, pull up what looks like an ATM menu of ratings categories, and then program that particular TV set to receive from then on only the shows they deem acceptable. The Motion Picture Association of America has proposed a variation on its age-based movie ratings for the V-chip, while others argue for categories that break down shows by content. The end result, though, is the same: the V-chip will give interested parents a chance to exercise some degree of control over the electronic stranger in their living room. Now, what could be wrong with that?

Well, nothing—at least, for those inside the subway car. But there are at least two potential rearranging effects worth thinking about. One of them results from the fact that the V-chip is likely to increase the amount of sex and violence on television, not decrease it. In

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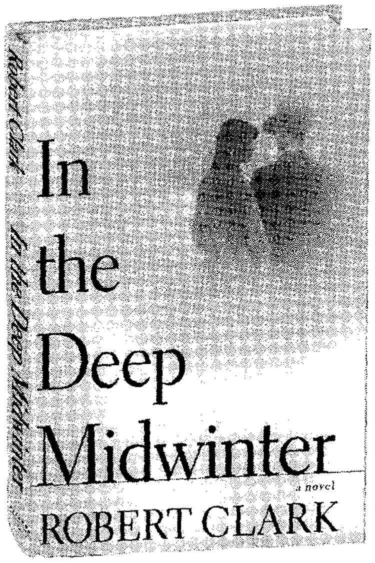

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the 1992 Cable Act, there is a provision that requires cable operators to take all "patently offensive" sexual programming on their leased-access channels, lump it together on a single channel, and then block that channel from general distribution unless customers specifically ask to receive it. But last June the Supreme Court, in Denver Area Educational Telecommunications Consortium, Inc., et al. v. Federal Communications Commission, et al., struck down that provision. Why? Because the V-chip is on its way, and, as Justice Breyer argued, allowing people to block offensive programming for themselves infringes on free-speech rights far less than having cable operators block it for them. And the networks? No doubt they'll clean up shows aimed at young families in order to avoid getting V-zapped, but for other shows—those targeted at adult audiences—the V-chip removes the need to show any restraint at all.

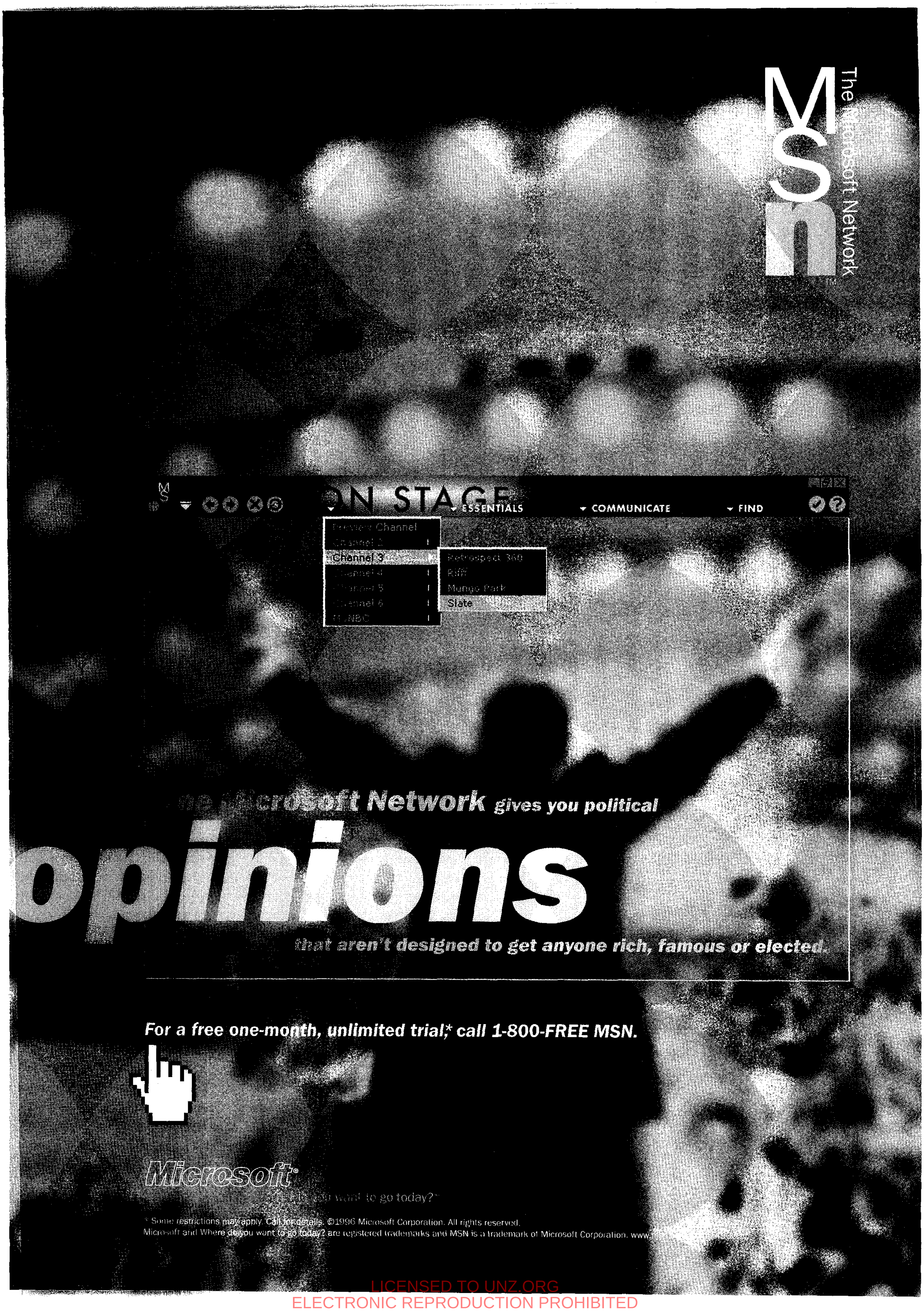
This is where the rearranging effect comes in. TV is nice and cool for those with a V-chip. But hot, *humid* TV isn't going away. It's simply being pushed onto people without a V-chip. And who are those people? In the short run, they're people who aren't rich enough to buy a new television set as long as the old one is still working. In the long run, they're parents who don't care what their children watch. This is not an insubstantial group. According to one recent study, somewhere between twenty and twenty-seven per cent of the parents of four- to six-year-olds never restrict their children's viewing hours, never decide what programs they can watch, never change the channel when something objectionable comes on, and never forbid the watching of certain programs. It has apparently never occurred to these parents that television can be a bad influence, and it strains credulity to think that the advent of the V-chip is going to wake them up. Yet their families—mainly lower-income, ill-educated—are the very ones most in need of protection from television violence. Here is a rearranging effect with a vengeance: not only does the V-chip make television worse, it makes television worse precisely for those already most vulnerable to its excesses.

And then there is the second rearranging effect. The V-chip is a response to the increasingly violent content of television programming, but content is only half the story. The second—and largely ignored—problem with television is that children watch too much of it and, as a result, spend less time in creative play, less time interacting with other children, less time reading, and less time doing their homework. Watching television for four or five hours a day is a very bad thing for children, even if every minute of what they watch is brilliant educational programming.

The V-chip addresses the problem of content but not the problem of time. In fact, it's conceivable that for concerned parents the effect of solving the former will be to exacerbate the latter. Over the past thirty years, television has become steadily more violent, and middle-class parents have become steadily more vigilant about monitoring their children's viewing, yet the amount of time children spend watching television has *still* increased, to the point where children under eleven now watch something like thirty hours of TV a week. Soon, thanks to technology, parents will be able to permanently screen out undesirable shows, and will never again have to worry about their children's watching sex and violence and hearing bad language. Parents will be able to relax about content. How much more will viewing time increase now?

This is not to say we shouldn't have a V-chip, any more than we shouldn't air-condition subway cars. The lesson of the subway paradox is simply that if we are going to cool the trains we might give a bit of thought to improving the ventilation of the stations as well; and the lesson of the V-chip is much the same. V-chips will work only if parents can be induced to use them, especially parents not currently convinced of television's dangers. And, now that we are thinking about a V-chip, we should also think about a T-chip—a time chip—to make sure that we aren't simply rearranging the content problem into a viewing-time problem. Past a certain point, after all, the only solution is to turn the damn thing off.

—MALCOLM GLADWELL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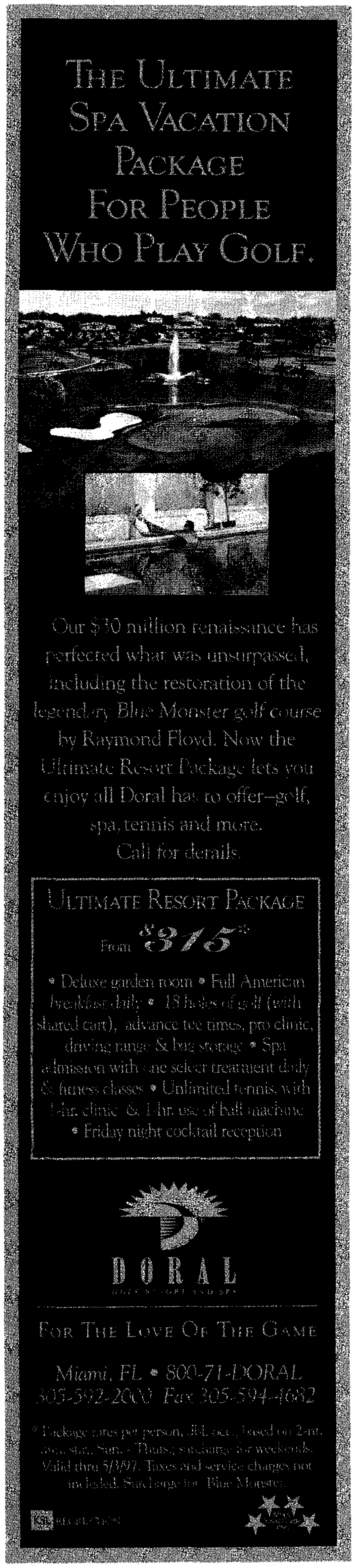

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PETERSON PROTESTS

According to John Cassidy ("Spooking the Boomers," January 13th), I carelessly exaggerate the magnitude of America's future fiscal challenge. Cassidy charges me with making this "alarmist" assertion: "By 2040, the cost of Social Security and Medicare is projected to rise from 17% to between 35% and 55% of workers' payroll." But these alarming numbers are not mine. They come from the latest official reports of the Trustees of the Social Security and Medicare systems. Cassidy also implies that it is merely my view that, if current policies are left in place, by 2030 federal entitlement spending will consume all federal revenue, leaving nothing for any government function, not even paying interest on the national debt. But these figures come directly from the Interim Report of Congress's Bipartisan Commission on Entitlement and Tax Reform (and were approved by every one of its twenty congressional members) and have since been corroborated by the Congressional Budget Office and the General Accounting Office.

Cassidy goes on to say that the "basic flaw" of my analysis of entitlements is that I look at the combined cost of Social Security and Medicare, instead of treating them as separate budget items. Actually, in my book "Will America Grow Up Before It Grows Old?" I always carefully distinguish between these two programs, with respect to both fiscal status and reform strategy. Still, the two programs pay benefits to the same people (mostly retirees), derive revenues from the same people (mostly workers) and via the same tax (mostly FICA), make use of similar budgetary devices ("trust funds"), are buffeted by the same demographic forces, and are authorized by the same Social Security Act. Is it so odd to think that the two have something in common?

Defenders of the status quo also combine these two programs, when it suits their purposes. They did so in the early nineteen-eighties when they urged that the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund be allowed to borrow from its sister "Social Security" trust fund, Hospital Insurance, which was then in surplus. If they now insist that health-care spending is a separate issue, is it because they don't want the public to confront the huge retirement costs of an aging population in its totality? Do they imagine that future American workers won't mind bearing a stupefying total tax burden as long as different government agencies collect the money and spend it?

Cassidy apparently agrees with me that Medicare is a greater problem than Social Security, and, indeed, the reforms needed to make Medicare sustainable will ultimately require wrenching ethical and social choices. When America faces up to these choices, the reforms I now propose for Social Security will seem mild. In the meantime, Medicare's forthcoming insolvency cannot be used as an excuse for doing nothing about Social Security. To the contrary, it makes Social Security reform all the more urgent—in order to make fiscal room for the inexorable rise in health-care costs.

According to Cassidy, Social Security's Trust Fund will be able to pay every penny of promised benefits through the year 2029—and if Congress enacts a tax hike of 2.2 per cent of the payroll now the Trust Fund will be solvent for the next seventy-five years. Cassidy does not explain that such a tax hike is inconceivable in today's political climate, both because it would be so large (sixty-nine billion dollars this year) and because it would hit the middle class head on. No one would dream of calling it small if it were anything more than a rhetorical proposal.

In any case, such a tax hike is beside the point, since the Trust Fund, whose solvency it purports to insure, is illusory: the fund consists merely of IOUs backed by federal taxing powers—a claim, in other words, on future taxpayers. When the time comes to redeem these IOUs, Congress will have to hike other taxes or borrow more from the public in order to raise the cash. What really matters (as Alan Greenspan, the chairman of the Federal Reserve, never tires of reminding Congress) is the effect of the annual difference between Social Security's outlays and its earmarked tax revenues on the unified budget deficits. Under current law, this operating balance will turn negative in 2012 and widen to a sobering six hundred and fifty billion dollars annually by 2029, the last year the program will remain technically solvent. Even if the much touted 2.2-per-cent solution

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were enacted immediately, Social Security would still face yawning operating deficits starting in 2021.

More important, Trust Fund accounting willfully disregards America's most pressing economic need: increasing the razor-thin rate of national savings, including household savings. In this latter connection, Cassidy accuses me of "spooking the boomers." Actually, the boomers seem to have been spoofing—not spooking—themselves. They're living in a retirement fantasyland. A substantial majority say they expect to retire before they're sixty-five and to live as well as they do now. Yet less than half of the private-sector workforce is now covered by any type of employer pension. Among adults in their late fifties, the age when most workers are facing retirement, median net financial assets are a paltry twelve thousand dollars. The Stanford economist B. Douglas Bernheim calculates that even if promised benefits were to be paid in full (and they won't be) the typical boomer household would have to triple its savings rate to enjoy an undiminished standard of living in retirement.

Finally, Cassidy charges that my reform proposals are extreme and unwarranted. Why? Because instead of shifting IOUs from one pocket to the other they generate real savings? Because they give workers the security of asset ownership? Because they improve the return on contributions? Because they guarantee a funded system and prevent that money from masking deficits elsewhere in the budget? Because they provide a more generous safety net for all retirees?

Cassidy says it's bad politics to subject current benefits to an income test, on the theory that the affluent have to be bribed before they will agree to support the poor. But recent surveys show that means-testing (which I would apply to all federal benefits) is popular—favored even by majorities of affluent and elderly voters.

Beyond the specifics of reform lies a difference in perspective. Trust Fund accounting ignores the real problem, which is not how to meet some official test of Social Security's solvency but how to insure the program's economic sustainability and generational equity. Sustainability means avoiding future operating deficits and raising total national savings. Equity means discontinuing a chain letter in which each generation gets a worse deal than the last.

While we still have time, we had better reconsider how an aging society should structure and pay for its institutions of retirement. It would be a tragedy to settle for marginal changes that will be overwhelmed when the boomers begin to retire.

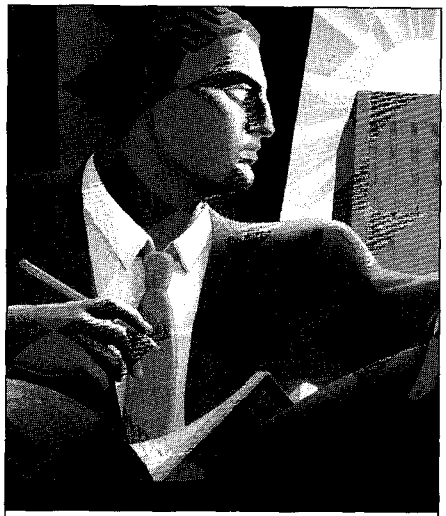
Yes, a genuine solution will require sacrifice. Today's workers will have to start funding more of their own retirement as they continue to pay for their parents' via FICA taxes. And many of today's retired parents (those who can afford it) will have to forgo a bit of what they're now receiving. An aging society will challenge the nation to do just what Americans find so difficult today: giving up a little in the near term so that everyone will be much better off in the long term. For our venerable Social Security program to endure we must give future generations a good reason to regard it as an ally rather than as a burden. Cassidy thinks I am wrong to find this challenge daunting. But never before has America faced a demographic transformation of such awesome proportions—with so many elderly people living such long lives in retirement with such high costs of medical care. The problem is unprecedented. That, at least, should be recognized—whether one agrees or disagrees with my specific proposals.

PETER G. PETERSON
New York City

CASSIDY REPLIES

Let us be clear: Pete Peterson's proposals are extreme. Under his plan, the retirement age would be raised to seventy. Workers would pay payroll taxes, but they would also have to contribute an additional five per cent of their income to compulsory savings accounts. Benefits would be slashed, and retirees would have to supplement their Social Security checks with withdrawals from their savings accounts. A means test would further reduce benefits for anybody with an annual income of more than forty thousand dollars. Peterson now claims these reforms would "guarantee a more generous safety net for all retirees," but in his book he wrote, "As private retirement accounts increase, the affluence test can gradually be made stricter, until the current universal Social Security system becomes a much less costly floor of protection that only pays benefits to the truly needy."

The key question is whether Social Security's finances are in such bad shape that the program needs to be so radically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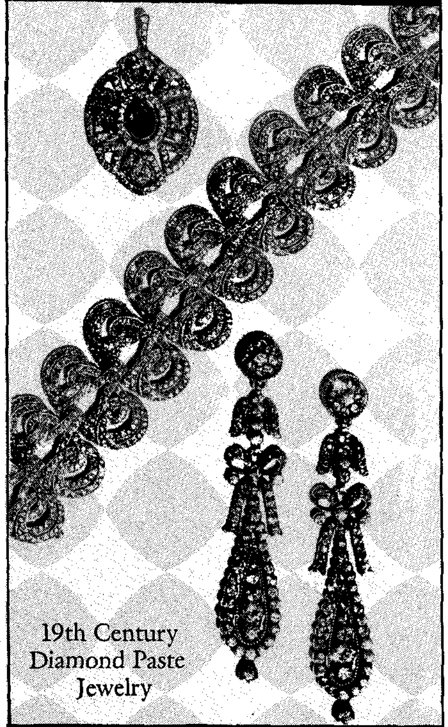

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transformed. As I reported, the aggregate deficit facing the retirement system over the next seventy-five years amounts to just over two per cent of total payroll in that period. (This is not my figure. It, like Peterson's, was produced by the Social Security Trustees.) A deficit of this size is significant but hardly terminal; it could be closed by a series of modest adjustments to benefits and taxes which would maintain the fundamentals of the current system.

Peterson claims that Social Security's Trust Fund is "illusory," because its contents are "IOUs backed by federal taxing powers." These IOUs are called Treasury bonds. They make up a large part of the investment portfolios of virtually every private pension fund in the country, not to mention the portfolios of millions of individual investors. If the value of Treasury bonds is illusory, perhaps Peterson could send me a box of them, and I will forward it to a charity of his choice.

I repeat, Peterson exaggerates the crisis by disingenuously including projections for Medicare spending in his discussion of the future viability of Social Security. Of course the two programs have something in common, but fully two-thirds of the projected cost increases that he details are due to the rising cost of health care, not retirement benefits. I did not question the source of Peterson's figures, only his use of them. I agree with him that Medicare's forthcoming insolvency should not be an excuse for inaction on Social Security, but neither should it be used as a pretext for gutting the highly successful pension program.

One more point. The aging of the baby boomers is real, but "awesome" and "unprecedented" it is not. We have already lived through a graying of America. In 1955, there were 8.6 workers for every retiree; in 1995, there were 3.3; and in 2040, if current trends persist, there will be about two. What lies ahead is the continuation of a well-established phenomenon, not something shockingly new. Despite his protestations to the contrary, Peterson is, indeed, spooking the boomers.

JOHN CASSIDY
New York City

Letters should be as brief as possible, and sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "The Mail," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. They may be edited for length and clarity.

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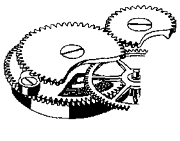

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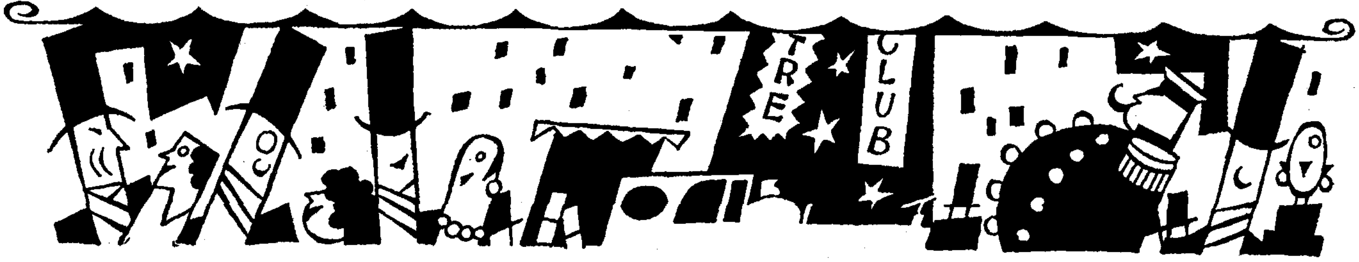

THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Concert Pianist—In a new one-man comedy written by and starring Barry Neikrug, a master pianist attempts to find a compatible teacher. A Jewish Repertory Theatre production. In previews through Jan. 18. Opens Jan. 19 at 7. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

Do Lord Remember Me—The New Federal Theatre's twentieth-anniversary production of James de Jongh's drama, based on the stories of men and women born into slavery. Previews Jan. 15-18. Opens Jan. 19 at 7. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448.)

Marking—Infidelity breeds death and chaos, in a dark comedy written by Patrick Breen and directed by Elizabeth Gottlieb. The cast includes Maria Tucci. In previews through Jan. 19. Opens Jan. 21 at 8 and continues through Feb. 9. (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Minutes from the Blue Route—Elizabeth Franz, Catherine Kellner, Matt McGrath, and Stephen Mendillo star in Tom Donaghy's family drama, directed by David Warren. Previews begin Jan. 16. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 239-6200.)

Mock Trial—Romulus Linney directs Theatre for the New City's production of his drama about a moot-court examination of a charismatic defendant. Preview on Jan. 16. Opens Jan. 17 at 8 and continues through Feb. 9. (155 First Ave., at 10th St. 254-1109.)

Mother Courage and Her Children—Jean Cocteau Repertory's production of Brecht's play, in the Eric Bentley–Darius Milhaud adaptation, will run in repertory with Aphra Behn's Restoration comedy "The Lucky Chance." Previews Jan. 17-18. Opens Jan. 19 at 3. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

My Astonishing Self—Donal Donnelly portrays George Bernard Shaw, in a one-man show created by Michael Voysey from the playwright's letters, diaries, speeches, and other writings. Previews begin Jan. 17. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

Second-Hand Smoke—In his latest play, Mac Wellman ruminates on the state of America at the end of the twentieth century. The cast includes Joanna Adler, David Greenspan, and Kristine Nielsen. Preview on Jan. 15. Opens Jan. 16 at 8. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052.)

The Steward of Christendom—The Irish playwright Sebastian Barry's drama is set in 1932 in a County Wicklow mental home, and its title character is based on his great-grandfather, a Catholic loyalist to the British throne who was the last chief superintendent of the Dublin Metropolitan Police before the establishment of the Irish Free State. Starring Donal McCann and directed by Max Stafford-Clark. Previews begin Jan. 18. (Majestic, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100.)

OPENED RECENTLY

The Barber of Seville—Michael Feingold's new translation of Beaumarchais's comedy, in a Pearl Theatre Company production. (80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802. Closes Jan. 18.)

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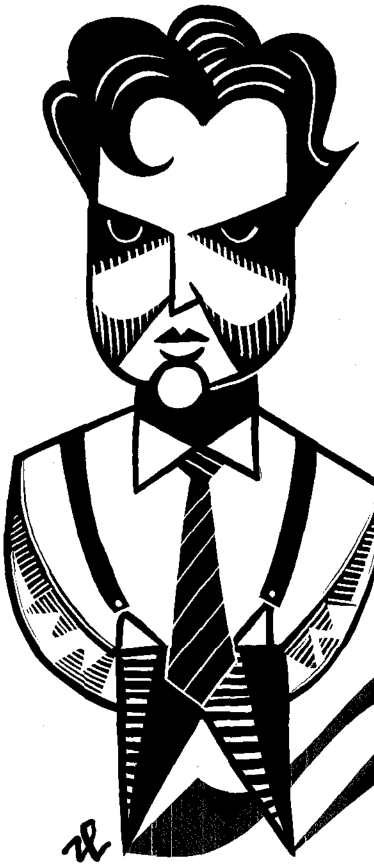
19	20	21				

Beat: A Subway Cop's Comedy—John DiResta, New York City transit policeman and standup comic, files a report on his subterranean workplace. (Kaufman, 534 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

A Brief History of White Music—A comic revue by Dee Dee Thomas and David Tweedy, in which an all-black cast interprets the music of Sonny and Cher, the Beach Boys, the Beatles, and other honkies. (Village Gate, 240 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

Chicago—The long-legged Ann Reinking is the ingénue Roxie Hart, a role she played at one point in the original 1975 production; Bebe Neuwirth is streamlined and sardonic as her man-killer sidekick; and the angular chorus line, in skimpy black, is as stunning and hard-edged as Bob Fosse's dances. Walter Bobbie's bookless, setless revival of the Kander-Ebb-Fosse extravaganza of cynicism (choreographed by Reinking this time around) has enough razzle-dazzle and flashes of lucid sarcasm to set the audience cheering almost from the start. The story is about a woman who gets away with murder; this pared-down concert posing as a full-dress musical may do the same. (Reviewed in our issue of 11/25/96.) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)



Kevin Anderson, in "The Red Address."

ROBERT DE MICHIELL

Cloud Tectonics—Playwrights Horizons' typically fine production of José Rivera's play rings loud and true. But the work itself—a glancing magic-realist meditation on the cruelty of time toward love, both physical and spiritual—sounds an off note. The structure is so sketchy that the central relationship, between an enigmatic hitchhiker who lives beyond the confines of time (Camilia Sanes) and the driver who takes her in (John Ortiz), seems both physically and spiritually inconsequential. Directed by Tina Landau. (416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes Jan. 19.)

Family Values—A sex comedy by the Canadian playwright Carl Ritchie. Ed (Joel Fabiani) is a blustery podiatrist who longs for the days when his ex-wife (Ellen Evans) would rub his feet for hours on end; he also wishes that his son weren't, as he puts it, a "fruit," and that his daughter weren't "boinking" her boyfriend. Daniel Ettinger's set, an apartment awash in chintz, is much more tasteful than the sitcomlike proceedings. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 358-5174.)

Flipping My Wig—Charles Busch drags in the New Year with a new one-woman revue. With music by Dick Gallagher and Rusty Magee and lyrics by Mr. Busch. (WPA, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523. Closes Jan. 26.)

Forbidden Broadway Strikes Back!—Gerard Alessandrini cuts a satirical swath through the Great White Way in the latest edition of his musical parody. (Triad, 158 W. 72nd St. 799-4599.)

Full Gallop—The legendary, vividly eccentric fashion editor Diana Vreeland is the subject of Mary Louise Wilson and Mark Hampton's one-woman play, in which Wilson stars. Set in 1971, shortly after Vreeland was fired from *Vogue*, it's rich and resonant, with much to say about life that's worth hearing. A thoroughly satisfying evening in the theatre—very funny and very moving. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)

Howard Crabtree's When Pigs Fly—The exuberant designer Howard Crabtree died last June, and this revue of witty, satiric songs (created with and written and directed by Mark Waldrop, and sung by a talented cast dressed in Crabtree's sequinned, feathered, mind-boggling costumes) is a fitting cap to his career. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change—In made-for-musical-theatre voices, the appealing cast of Joe DiPietro and Jimmy Roberts's crowd-pleasing revue about love and marriage sings songs examining made-for-musical-theatre issues. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)

Joseph Gabriel: Magic on Broadway—Mr. Gabriel has performed at the Las Vegas Flamingo Hilton for the past ten years, and his feats are certainly impressive, but it's all too clear from the trappings of his act—dancers in polka-dotted boxer shorts, a sequinned Elvis—that he hasn't left Nevada behind. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

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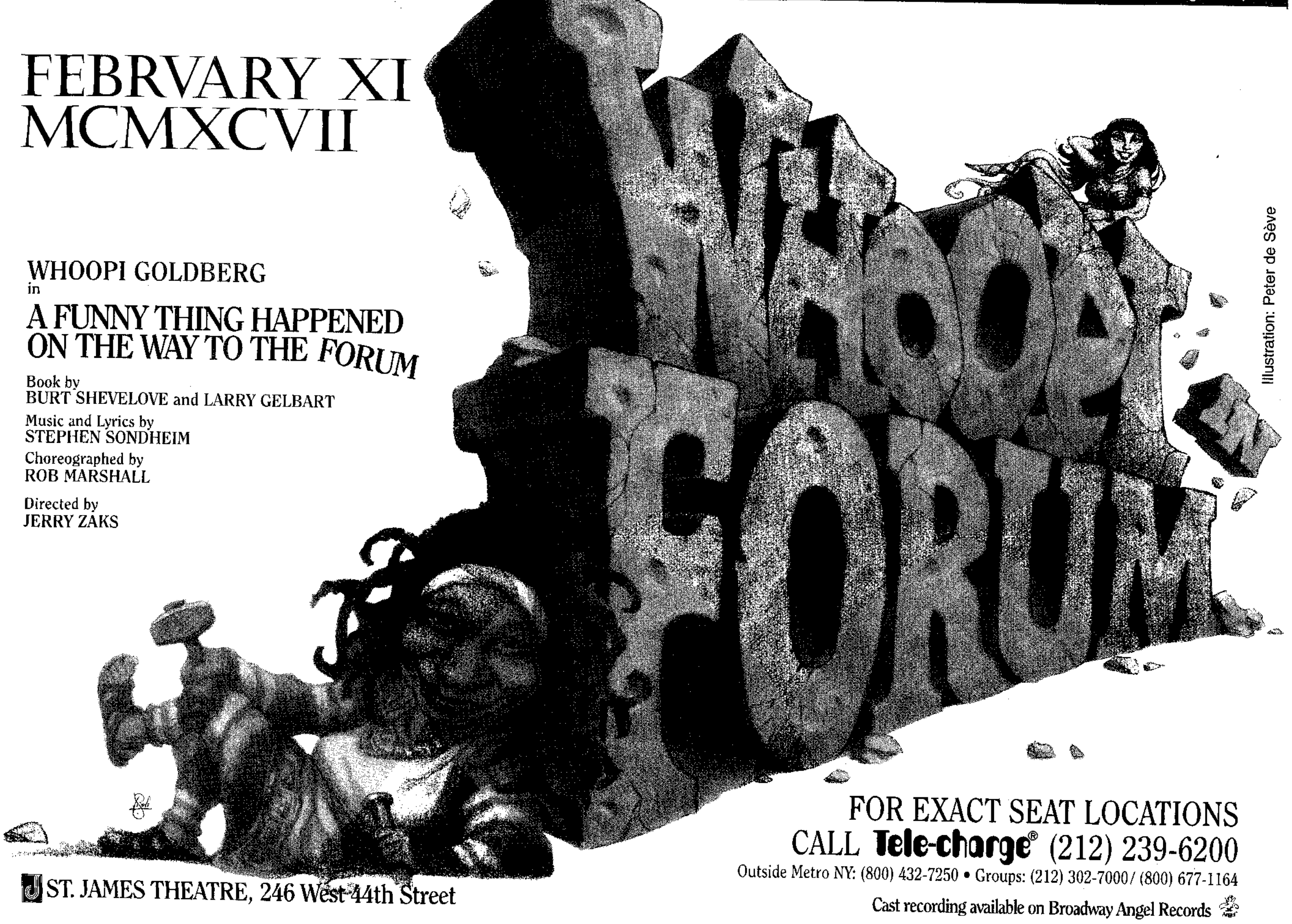

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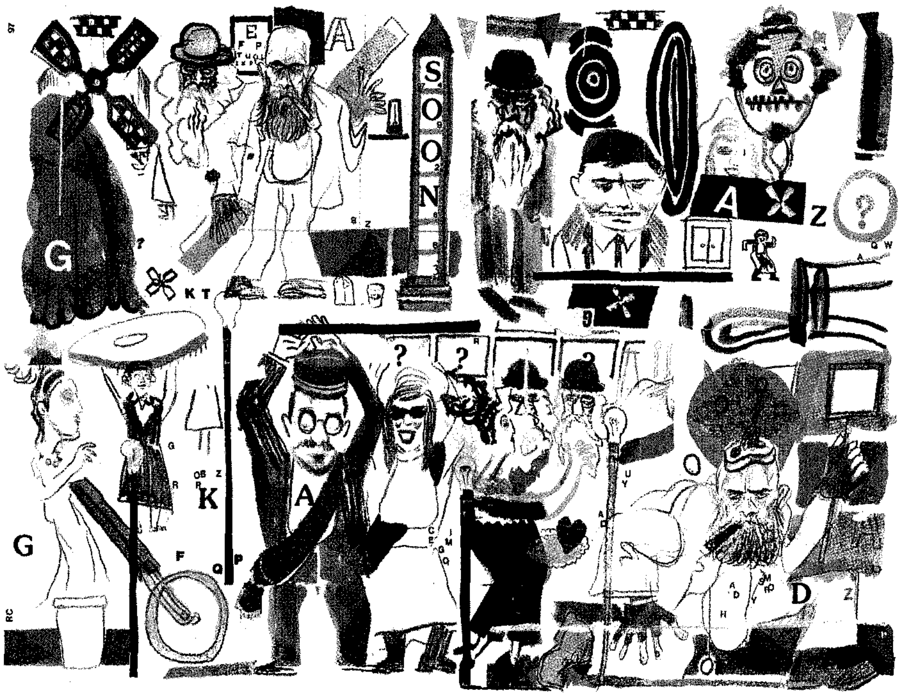

Richard Foreman's "Permanent Brain Damage."

June Moon—The Drama Dept. presents George S. Kaufman and Ring Lardner's 1929 musical comedy about a Tin Pan Alley songwriter, starring Cynthia Nixon, Becky Ann Baker, Albert Macklin, and Robert Joy. Mark Nelson is the director. (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. 629-4656. Closes Jan. 19.)

Late Nite Catechism—Maripat Donovan offers a commandingly funny performance as the lone nun in charge of an adult catechism class, and the audience brings as much to the performance as the script does. (St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 279-4200.)

Message to Michael—*Another* comedy-drama about gay men searching for love in New York City? If that's your attitude, then Rattlestick Productions' latest staging may not be your cup of tea. All the same, the young playwright Tim Pinckney shows a keen talent for witty dialogue and the well-timed one-liner in a depiction of gay culture which is happier and gentler than some of its predecessors. (Theatre Off Park, 224 Waverly Pl., at 11th St. 627-2556. Closes Feb. 2.)

Neat—Charlayne Woodard's new one-woman show, a memoir of growing up in the sixties, is a companion to her "Pretty Fire," which she performed here in 1993. Directed by Tazewell Thompson. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

No Way to Treat a Lady—The York Theatre Company begins an all-musical season—its first ever—with a comedy-thriller based on the William Goldman novel of the same title, about a detective in pursuit of an actor turned murderer. Book, music, and lyrics by Douglas J. Cohen. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-5820. Closes Jan. 19.)

Old Wicked Songs—Jon Marans' well-written piece of sentimental sanctimony asks the question: Can a blocked, arrogant twenty-five-year-old pianist (Justin Kirk) find wisdom under the tutelage of a suicidal singing teacher (Hal Robinson) who survived the Holocaust? (The answer is yes.) (9/16/96) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

Once Upon a Mattress—Gerald Gutierrez's revival of Mary Rodgers's 1959 musical, based on Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale "The Princess and the Pea," has topnotch production values but very little reason for being, unless you have a fondness for dumb, Eisenhower-era sex jokes and marshmallowy melodies. That modern madcap Sarah Jessica Parker shines as the princess, but she deserves a vehicle that, to paraphrase Jerome Kern, is not merely lovely to look at but delightful to know. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Permanent Brain Damage—The latest musings on human consciousness from Richard Foreman and his Ontological-Hysteric Theatre. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650.)

The Pirates of Penzance—A production of the New York Gilbert & Sullivan Players. Jan. 16-17 at 8, Jan. 18 at 3 and 8, and Jan. 19 at 3. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.)

Present Laughter—As the monumentally egotistical West End star Garry Essendine, Frank Langella keeps the core of Noël Coward's 1939 comedy of bad manners alive with a full-tilt assault on the character's outrageousness. Unfortunately, the director, Scott Elliott, seems to think that he's liberating Coward by turning the play into a bisexual romp. But he orchestrates some delicious farce moments, and the supporting players are funny even when Elliott is leading them down blind alleys. (11/25/96) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

The Red Address—A businessman's public persona belies the circumstances of his passionate private life, in a psychological drama written by David Ives and starring Kevin Anderson. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103.)

Repertorio Español—Performances of "El Aplauso Va por Dentro" ("The Applause from Within"), a new play by Mónica Montañés, starring the Venezuelan actress Mimí Lazo as a divorcée who puts herself through a punishing exercise regime in order to regain her youthful appearance, run in repertory with "El Cano" ("The Blond Man"), Louis Delgado's drama about an ambitious Puerto Rican who allows his boss to believe he is Italian, and "Cuentos Negros," a musical fable based on African-Caribbean folk tales, directed and choreographed by Adolfo Vázquez. Most performances are in Spanish, with simultaneous English translation available. (Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. 889-2850.)

Scapin—Bill Irwin and Mark O'Donnell's adaptation of Molière's comedy "The Rogueries of Scapin," directed by and starring Mr. Irwin. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

South—The playwright, novelist, and essayist Julian Green's 1953 drama, about a Polish military officer's visit to a Carolina plantation, is set on the night before the outbreak of the War Between the States. A Target Margin Theatre staging. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202. Closes Feb. 2.)

The Two Gentlemen of Verona—Theatre for a New Audience joins forces with Shakespeare's Globe, London, to present the Globe's staging of the comedy. The cast includes Mark Rylance, Anastasia Hille, Matthew Scurfield, Jim Bywater, Lennie James, and Stephanie Roth. (New Victory, 209 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. Closes Jan. 26.)

Vilna's Got a Golem—In a new play by Ernest Joselovitz, set in a small Eastern European town in 1889, a government censor attends the opening-night performance of a Yiddish theatre troupe's controversial production. With musical accompaniment by members of the Klezmer Conservatory Band. (American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797. Closes Feb. 2.)

LONG RUNS

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **BRING IN DA NOISE, BRING IN DA FUNK:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **GREASE!:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **AN IDEAL HUSBAND:** Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. (Closes Jan. 26.) . . . **THE KING AND I:** Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100. . . . **MASTER CLASS:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **RENT:** Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **SUNSET BOULEVARD:** Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4007. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **VICTOR/VICTORIA:** Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.

DANCE

New York City Ballet—Jan. 15 at 8: "Correlazione," "The Cage," "Other Dances," and "Vienna Waltzes." . . . ¶ Jan. 16 at 8: "Swan Lake," "Correlazione," and "The Concert." . . . ¶ Jan. 17 at 8: "Concerto Barocco," "Tchaikovsky Pas de Quatre," "Moves," and "Symphony in C." . . . ¶ Jan. 18 at 2: "Swan Lake," "Circus Polka," "Reliquary," and "Vienna Waltzes." . . . ¶ Jan. 18 at 8: "Concerto Barocco," "Sonatine," "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," "Kammermusik No. 2," and "Brahms-Schoenberg Quartet." . . . ¶ Jan. 19 at 3: "Swan Lake," "The Cage," "Other Dances," and "Symphony in C." . . . ¶ Jan. 21 at 8: "Ballo della Regina," "The Chairman Dances," "Tchaikovsky Pas de Quatre," and "Vienna Waltzes." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. The season continues through March 2.)

"Altogether Different"—Continuing three weeks of performances by seven contemporary-dance companies, with programs that, in every case, include a première and, in most cases, at least one seasoned work. Jan. 15 at 8: **POPPO AND THE GO-GO BOYS,** in "Crazy Me, Crazy You." . . . ¶ Jan. 16-17 at 8: **DANCE BY NEIL GREENBERG,** with the choreographer performing his solo from "Not-About-AIDS-Dance," and the company joining him for "The Disco Project" and "Part Three (My Fair Lady)." Greenberg, a former Cunningham dancer, gives the kinds of clues which are missing from the works of his onetime master. When he begins his solo, for ex-

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Come mid-January, just as New Yorkers have recovered from the holidays, an energetic celebration of the art, history, and contemporary spirit of Russia's St. Petersburg will provide a much needed diversion. *St. Petersburg: A Cultural Celebration* will take place at the World Financial Center and other artistic and educational venues throughout the city.

Treasures that survey the cultural legacy of St. Petersburg through three centuries—many of which have never before been seen outside of Russia—will be exhibited at the WFC Liberty Street Gallery. The interdisciplinary program includes music and dance performances, a literature series, video screenings, workshops, and gallery talks.

And if that's not reason enough to celebrate, the public is invited to attend an Imperial Ball on February 13th in the Winter Garden of the World Financial Center. Imagine a light snow falling while the New American Chamber Orchestra serenades dancers twirling under the high glass dome, recalling the magic of this Russian city, and transporting guests to another place and time.

ILLUSTRATION BY JEFFREY FISHER

JANUARY 14 TO MARCH 9, 1997

The World Financial Center Arts & Events

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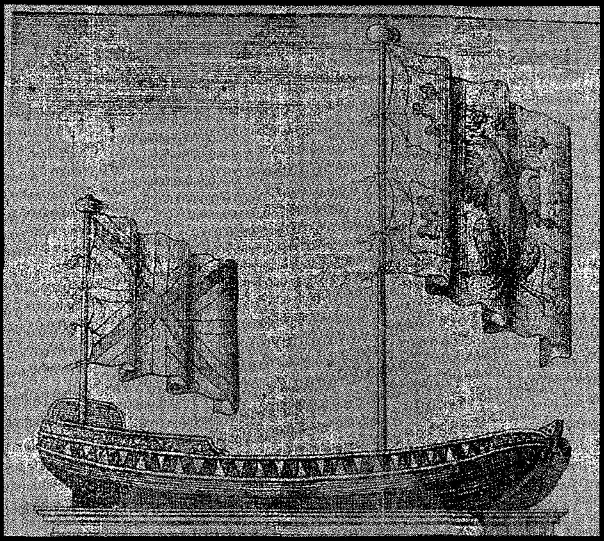
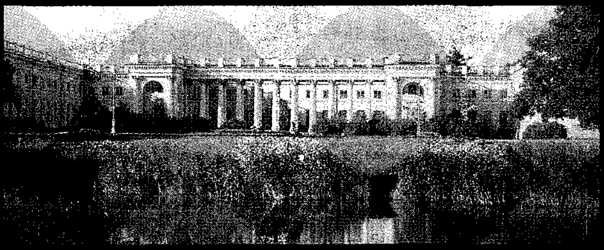
OLD AND NEW

TREASURES NEVER BEFORE SEEN OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA


(*ETCHING*) PETER THE GREAT'S *BOTIK*, IN THE WFC'S WINTER GARDEN.


ALEXANDER PALACE, THE PRE-EXILE RESIDENCE OF NICHOLAS II AND HIS FAMILY.

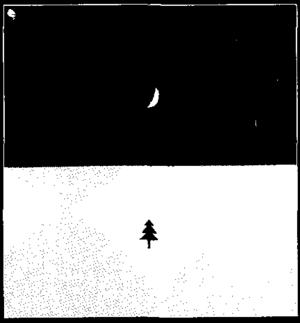
The upcoming cultural exhibition, *The Legacy of Peter the Great,* encompasses more than 225 works from seven St. Petersburg institutions, along with gems from New York-area collections. Items going on display tell a proud story of the city's artistic heritage, its cross-pollination of talent, and the ongoing efforts to communicate St. Petersburg's vast cultural legacy.

St. Petersburg's Central Naval Museum is lending a collection of historical flags, memorabilia of life along the Neva River, and Peter the Great's 22-foot boat. *This spectacular Russian* national treasure (c. 1640) will be on view for the duration of the fest. A literary and archival resource, the National Library of Russia, St. Petersburg is presenting 18th century engravings. (Books from that era will also be drawn from the New York Public Library.)

Historical artifacts representing Russian theater and ballet from 1743-1980, courtesy of St. Petersburg's State Museum of Theater and Music, are on display. Costumes, drawings, theatrical posters, and photographs illustrating the city's famed drama, opera, and dance traditions—recall Petipa, Diaghilev, Pavlova, and Shostakovich. Sketches and miniatures for set designs and artists' personal effects are also on view. Hand-painted, turn-of-the-century shop signs from the State Museum of the History of St. Petersburg provide a glimpse at life in the city that has long been Russia's "window on the west."

Treasured objects, portraits of the royal family, Nicholas II's military uniform, and czarinas' finery come from the Tsarskoje Selo State Museum complex, which includes the Alexander Palace, former residence of the imperial Romanovs. As part of the mandate to restore the world's most endangered monuments, American Express has generously contributed to the World Monuments Fund's restoration project of this palace.

Since perestroika, nonconformist artistic expression is once again revered in this exuberant city.


AVANT-GARDE ARTIST NOVIKOV'S FABRIC COLLAGE.

CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

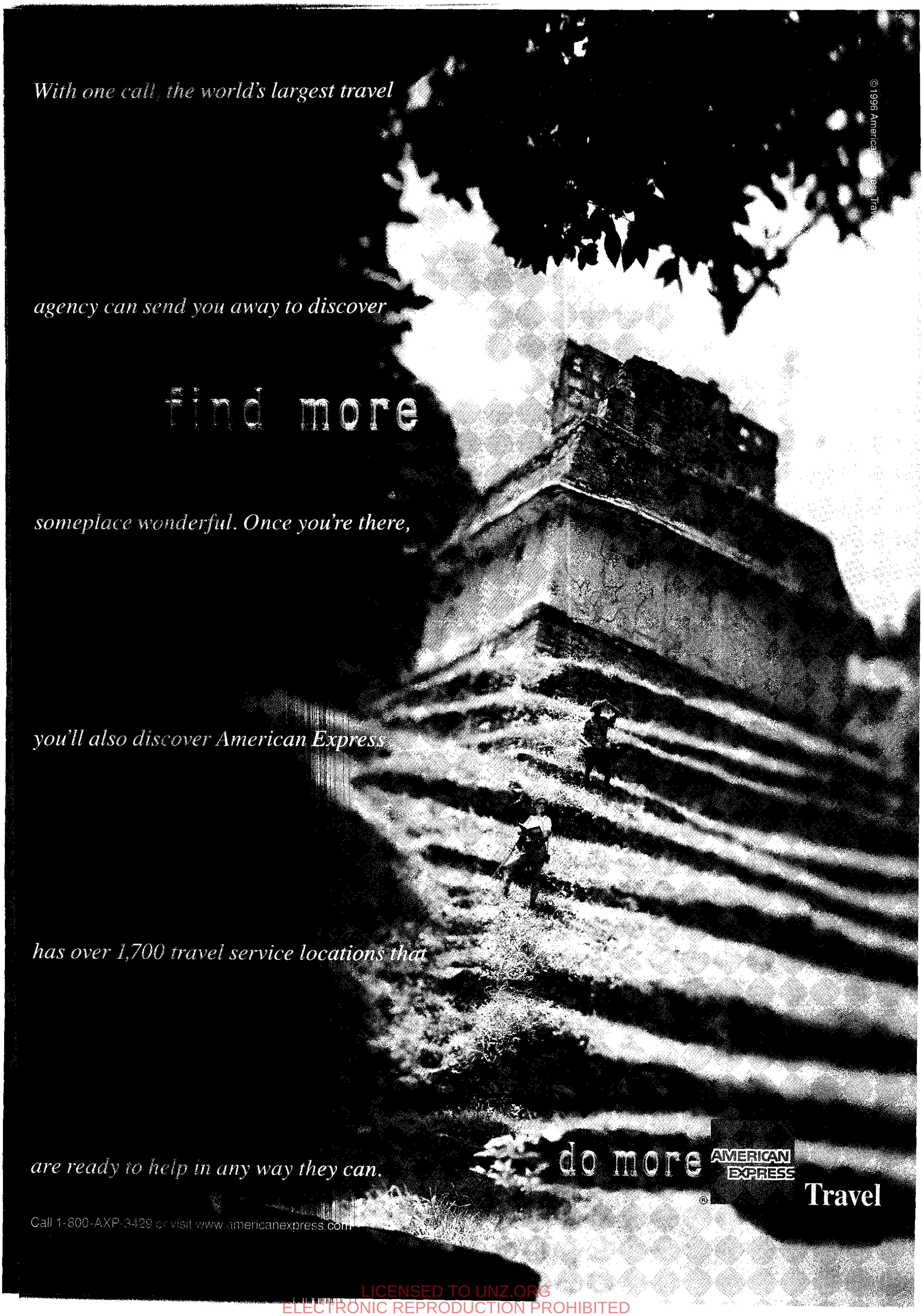
Forty-five works, which include paintings, lithographs, and sculpture from the Norton and Nancy Dodge Collection in the Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers University, are being lent to the winterfest. They document the struggle of non-conformist artists during the era of Soviet repression, 1956-1986.

With St. Petersburg artists again free to make and exhibit unconventional works, creativity has flourished. Fabric artist Timur Novikov, a leader in the city's avant-garde, has assembled seven new pieces for this exhibition. From the State Russian Museum, which boasts the foremost collection of Russian art, come two of Novikov's banners constructed during the last decade. At the cutting edge of new media, St. Petersburg's Gallery 21 is providing interactive presentations on the Internet as part of an exhibit linked to various websites designed by the city's experimental performing artists.

As St. Petersburg approaches its tercentennial, its rich artistic heritage, combined with its taste for contemporary art, make it a world cultural capital. Now, with this interdisciplinary winterfest, St. Petersburg shares its passion for the fine and perfomings arts with America. What's more, a new understanding has been constructed between two great cities.

The World Financial Center Arts & Events

JANUARY 14 TO MARCH 9, 1997



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Presented by The World Financial Center Arts & Events Program in association with CEC International Partners, New York and the St. Petersburg City Administration and Institute for Cultural Programs.

EVENTS CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

TUESDAY, JANUARY 14–SUNDAY, MARCH 9
The Legacy of Peter the Great
Exhibition • Liberty Street Gallery,
WFC, 225 Liberty Street, 212.945.0505

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15, 12:15 P.M.
The Mighty Five, American Russian
Youth Orchestra,
Chamber Music • WFC Winter Garden,
West Street at Liberty & Vesey streets,
212.945.0505

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15–FRIDAY,
JANUARY 17
Sergey Kuryokhin International Festival
Jazz • The Knitting Factory,
74 Leonard Street, 212.219.3006

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15–WEDNESDAY,
FEBRUARY 26, 6 P.M.
The Culture of St. Petersburg: Past & Present
Lecture Series • Metropolitan Museum of Art
Fifth Avenue at 82nd Street, 212.879.5500

THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 7 P.M.
Utopia • *Internet Performance*
New York Information Technology Center,
55 Broad Street,
212.945.0505

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22,
11 A.M.–2 P.M.
St. Petersburg Restored:
A Meeting of Age-Old
Techniques, *Workshop* •
WFC Winter Garden*

FRIDAY, JANUARY 24–
SATURDAY, JANUARY 25
Petersburg to Petrograd—
Films 1920-1990
Screenings • Anthology Film
Archives,
32 Second Avenue at 2nd
Street, 212.505.5110

TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 6:30 P.M.
The Myth of St. Petersburg: Fantastic
Reality Tales of the City
Reading • Stuyvesant High School,
345 Chambers Street, 212.945.0505

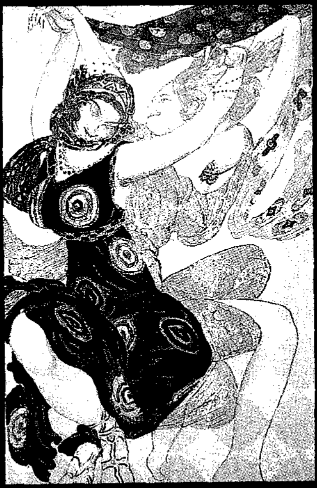
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 12:15 P.M.
Balanchine and St. Petersburg,
The New York City Ballet
Performance • WFC Winter Garden*

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 6:30 P.M.
From St. Petersburg to Leningrad:
Witness to an Age
Reading • Stuyvesant High School*

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 7 P.M.
Sacred Music from the Russian Orthodox Church
Performance • WFC Winter Garden*

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 7 P.M.
St. Petersburg String Quartet
Performance • WFC Winter Garden*

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 7–9 P.M.
The Winter Garden Imperial Ball
WFC Winter Garden*



BAKST COSTUME DESIGN FOR THE BALLET, *NARCISSE.*

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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 10 A.M.–4 P.M.
Russia Restored: St. Petersburg and Its Palaces
Symposium • Metropolitan Museum of Art*

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 6:30 P.M.
Satire in the St. Petersburg Tradition:
Humor and Political Resistance
Reading • Stuyvesant High School*

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 6:30 P.M.
The Wooden Room by Evgueni Ioufit
Screening • (filmmaker in attendance)
Museum of Modern Art,
11 West 53rd Street, Street Gallery,
212.708.9480

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 12:15 P.M.
Dance Theatre of Harlem Homage to
St. Petersburg Choreographers
Performance • WFC Winter Garden*

SATURDAY, MARCH 8, 11 A.M.–6 P.M.
A Tribute to Rudolf Nureyev
Discussion and Films • The Culture Center,
410 Columbus Avenue, 212.724.7363

SUNDAY, MARCH 9, 3 P.M.
Tchaikovsky Orchestral Pieces
Performance • WFC Winter Garden*

Admission is free to events at the World Financial Center Winter Garden, Liberty Street Gallery, and the Stuyvesant High School Theater in Battery Park City. For a complete schedule of events or more information, call 212-945-0505 **or visit www.worldfinancialcenter.com on the Internet.**

* *Please refer to the calendar's first reference of a venue for its address and phone number.*

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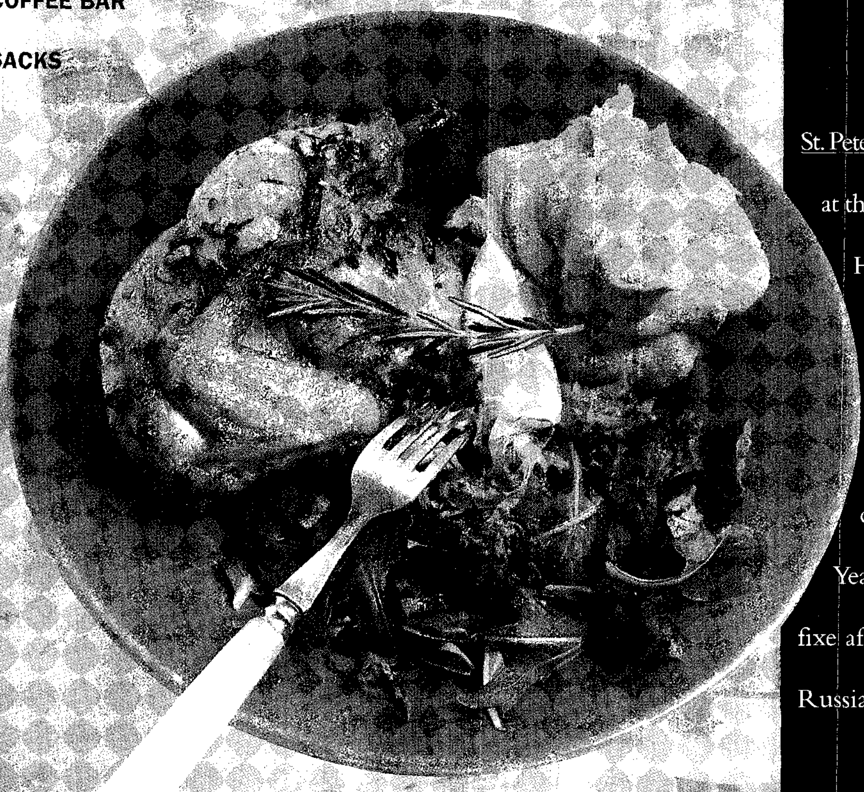

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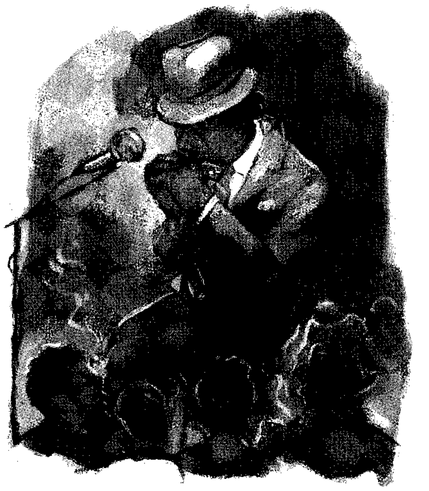


City Junior / Country Junior: Junior Wells, at Chicago B.L.U.E.S. ...

ample, a single sentence projected on the back wall ("This is the last material I made before my brother died") colors the audience's appreciation of the mesmerizing swoops and balances that follow. "Not only is there dancing going on, but there's performing, too," Greenberg says. "It's not like coming across cows in a field." He continues clueing in the audience in his most recent works: In the "The Disco Project," he exaggerates the lost-in-the-rhythm introspectiveness of club dancers until the moves become comic and haunted at once. And in "My Fair Lady" he takes on the loss of innocence: "I remember being heartbroken to find out that Audrey Hepburn didn't sing her own songs," he says. "But it taught me that art was illusion." . . . ¶ Jan. 18 at 8: **SARA PEARSON/PATRIK WIDRIG & CO.**, in "Muezzin," "Ordinary Festivals," "Journal Entries," and "Dr. Pearson's Guide to Loss and Fear." . . . ¶ Jan. 19 at 2 and 7:30: **ZVI GOTHEINER & DANCERS**, in "Oh, Moon of Alabama," "Lash," and "6 Solos by Men to Scarlatti." . . . ¶ Jan. 21 at 8: **NETA PULVERMACHER & DANCERS**, in "To Bite an Orange with Its Peel," "A Song," and "Zaz." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Through Jan. 26.)

KEVIN WYNN COLLECTION—The choreographer modifies his kaleidoscopic patterns, last seen in the '96 edition of Altogether Different, for the tighter confines of Dance Theatre Workshop, with four new works: "La Nuit Démolie," "Seems Like We Could," "Super Bon Bon," and "Gardenias on the Borderline." (219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Jan. 16-18 at 8.)

"CROSSING OVER"—Cynthia May & Company/Over 40 presents an evening-long work to a Scott Paul score that is augmented by Bach violin solos and performed live. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Jan. 16-19 at 8:30.)

"THE GOAT STORY"—Erstwhile rope walker Scott Heron offers the third installment of his collaboration with instrument maker Leslie Ross, who this time appears in a dress full of amplified live canaries and finches. Heron, who instead of counting steps in his dance confronts obstacles, confronts them this time in a silk bathrobe, a lion suit, a sari, and the sort of green shaggy pants we might expect of a café-society Pan. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Jan. 16-19 at 8:30.)

FLAMENCO LATINO—Aurora Reyes, Yvonne Gutierrez, Liliana Morales, and their thirteen-member company add Caribbean rhythms to the flamenco beat in several works, including "Se Nota el Acento," which, with its liberal use of the heavily accented Cuban *son*, turns the comment that so many Iberian flamenco dancers make to their Latin-American colleagues—"One can hear your accent"—into a bit of comical understatement. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 399-8519. Jan. 16-18 at 8 and Jan. 19 at 3.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

FRANK KIMBROUGH QUARTET—The pianist is joined by Rich Perry (tenor saxophone), Ed Howard (bass), and Matt Wilson (drums). (Museum of Modern Art Auditorium, 11 W. 53rd St. For information, call 995-1552. Jan. 17 at 5:30.)

HOUSTON PERSON and **ETTA JONES**—The tenor saxophonist and the vocalist, in a tribute to Martin Luther King, Jr., with the Meeting House Jazz Orchestra. (Friends Meeting House, 15 Rutherford Pl., at E. 15th St., between Second and Third Aves. 979-5030, ext. 148. Jan. 17 at 7:30.)

ISLEY BROTHERS—It's their thing, and for forty years these soul-music giants have been doing what they wanna do with it. Name the decade—they gave you a hit. The fifties brought "Shout"; the sixties, "This Old Heart of Mine"; the seventies, "Who's That Lady?"; the eighties, "Spend the Night (Ce Soir)." Their 1996 album, "Mission to Please," was produced by the young R. & B. phenomenon R. Kelly, and its single "Down Low (Nobody Has to Know)" was a fine end-of-millennium offering. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Jan. 17 at 8.)

ANDY STATMAN—Way before klezmer was hip, Statman was reaching back to the shtetl with his mournful clarinet and pushing forward to the New World with his mandolin fusions. When a man has honed his craft at bar mitzvahs and brisses, you know he's the real deal. In this concert, he and his band will be performing and improvising on works from his new album, "Between Heaven and Earth: Music of the Jewish Mystics." (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Jan. 18 at 8:30.)

SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK—Last winter, this riveting all-female a-cappella quintet, now in its second decade, released a terrific collection, "Sacred Ground," which incorporated R. & B., jazz, and (of course) gospel. And they know whereof they sing: Bernice Johnson Reagon, one of the group's founding members, produced and hosted an N.P.R. series called "Wade in the Water: African-American Sacred Music Traditions." The group appears here in its annual concert for children, commemorating the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr. (Washington Irving High School, Irving Pl. at 16th St. Jan. 19 at 2. For information about tickets, call 274-1948.)

KENNY DAVERN QUARTET—The jazz clarinet has been injected with new life in the work of virtuosos like Ken Peplowski (see Zinno) and Marty Ehrlich, but the standard remains Kenny Davern: for the past four decades he has tapped into the spirits of licorice-stick iconoclasts such as Pee Wee Russell by keeping quirky individuality on the same elevated level as sterling technique. Davern is accompanied here by Howard Alden (guitar—again, see Zinno), Greg Cohen (bass), and Tony De Nicola (drums). (Church of the Heavenly Rest, Fifth Ave. at 90th St. Jan. 19 at 5. Tickets at the door.)

PANTERA—"Far Beyond Driven," the 1994 release by these self-proclaimed cowboys from hell, went all the way to No. 1. The band's success probably has a lot to do with singer Philip Anselmo's trademark "guttural spews," which, we would wager, are best appreciated from a distance. Live, the boys promise to "crush at your ears like a vice [*sic*]." Their newest record is called "The Great Southern Trendkill." (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 247-0200. Jan. 19 at 7:30.)

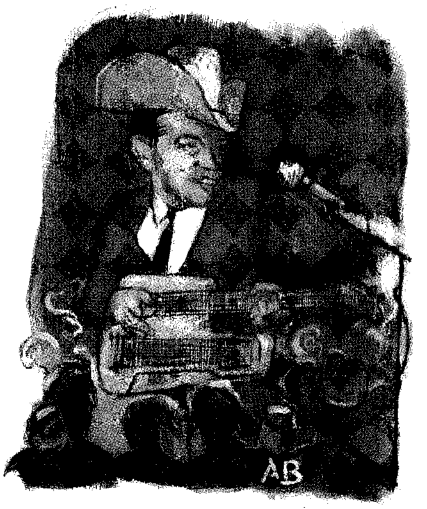
ROCK, ETC.

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is always advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Decent sight lines, great greasy food, prodigiously talented waitresses, and a consistent roster of high-quality acts. Jan. 17: An evening of "no risk" listening devoted to lesser-known artists who deserve national exposure: **BIG RUDE JAKE, MARTIN ZELLAR, AMY FAIRCHILD**, and **AMY RIGBY**. Jan. 18: **ANNIE HASLAM** is best know as the former lead singer of the seminal English art-rock band Renaissance. In a genre largely identified with blurry-eyed men in capes, her crystal-clear soprano was instantly recognizable. Over the years, she's had a hard time finding a suitable vehicle to which to harness her talent, but that voice remains a gift. / The **NUDES'** singer-guitarist, Walter Parks, met their cellist-vocalist, Stephanie Winters, through a *Village Voice* ad a few years back; together they formed the tallest duo in pop. The band played its first gig in 1991, and it's been making beautiful, jazz-inflected folk music ever since. Jan. 21: An Indiana cowboy with a flair for songs about heartbreak, hillbillies, and fools, **JUNIOR BROWN** is something of a country-and-Western throwback. He has a sense of humor, too: his guitar-propelled material is populated with state troopers and hula girls. But his fearsome-looking "guit steel"—a cross between a Fender Bullet and an old lap steel guitar—is what has made his reputation. He's probably the only guitarist who can switch from rapid-fire chicken pickin' to delicate slide work in the course of a single bar.

CHICAGO B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Jan. 18: **JUNIOR WELLS**, the Hoodoo Man himself, is back in town. The art of the amplified blues harmonica, cultivated in Chicago's fertile ground, has had only a handful of grand masters—Sonny Boy Williamson, Little Walter, James Cotton—and Wells can proudly count himself among them. Fondly remembered for his rambunctious partnership with Buddy Guy in the sixties and seventies, he's been a house-rocking performer for many years.

FEZ, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—Jan. 18: The self-proclaimed "Jewish lesbian folk-singer" **PHRANC**. Jan. 21: **PROFESSOR & MARYANN**. Like their "Gilligan's Island" namesakes, this precocious Staten Island duo balances the cerebral (courtesy of guitarist-songwriter Ken Rockwell) with dark good looks (from helium-throated singer Danielle Brancaccio). The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.



... and Junior Brown, at the Bottom Line and Maxwell's.

IRVING PLAZA, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Jan. 18: Though many still consider singer-guitarist Lou Barlow the first—and finest—of the lo-fi indie rockers, **SEBADOH**, his primary band, seems to have moved away from its acoustic roots. Actually, the wildly eclectic band of old, a group capable of covering the Minutemen and David Crosby with equal aplomb, simply splintered into a long series of side projects (Sparkalepsy, Sentri-

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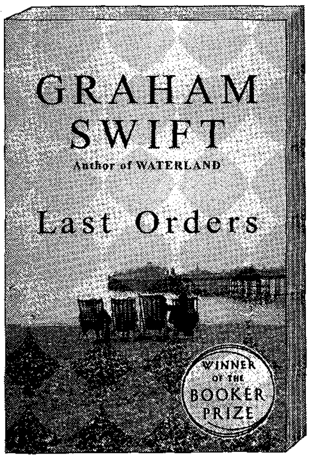

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doh, Folk Implosion, et al.). Having shed so many skins, today's Sebadoh is a leaner but not entirely new animal; the trio continues to play perfectly crafted, honest (read: ambiguous and emotionally twisted), impassioned songs about love and hate. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday. The dancers share a passion for the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. Sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

Manny's Car Wash, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—The Upper East Side blues. Jan. 15: Pompadoured rockabilly god **ROBERT GORDON.** Jan. 16: **NICK GRAVENITIES, HARVEY BROOKS,** and friends. Jan. 17: **TINO GONZALES.** Jan. 18: **JOHNNY ALLEN.**

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (201-798-4064)—Jan. 16: **CARDINAL WOOLSEY.** Jan. 17: **MOTHER, JUGS, AND SPEED.** Jan. 18: The **CONTINENTAL DRIFTERS** float over from Wetlands. Jan. 19: The legendary hardcore of **MURPHY'S LAW.** Jan. 20: **JUNIOR BROWN** (see the Bottom Line).

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Jan. 17: **FIVE CHINESE BROTHERS** formed more than a decade ago at Columbia University (as the Special Guests) and have since become local heroes and one of smart pop's great journeyman acts. Think Squeeze or Crowded House, only louder, looser, bluesier—more American. Jan. 20: **PULL MY DAISY.**

Rodeo Bar, 375 Third Ave., at 27th St. (683-6500)—The walls simulate a log cabin, smoke blows through the nostrils of a buffalo head, a horse trailer has been converted into a bar, and you get peanuts for eating and, sometimes, throwing. **MARY LEE'S CORVETTE** revs up on Jan. 15.

S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—Jan. 19: **GIL SCOTT-HERON.** In the seventies, while many of his R. & B. peers were blissfully succumbing to disco fever, singer-pianist Scott-Heron (who's also a poet and novelist) was fusing jazz and funk textures with sobering political rap. Now that socially conscious hip-hop artists have entered the pop charts en masse, Scott-Heron is enjoying something of a comeback. Dining.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Jan. 16: **BR5-49** plays riveting rock with a Nashville flavor. Jan. 17: **LARRY GRAHAM AND GRAHAM CENTRAL STATION.** In the galaxy of funk, Graham is a major star. Back in the seventies, while still with Sly and the Family Stone, he invented the popping bass line, the secret fuel that powers all the major grooves. Jan. 18: The legendary a-cappella R. & B. group the **PERSUASIONS.**

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Jan. 15: An evening of female funk, with **JOI CARDWELL, DANA BRYANT,** and the **RACHEL Z** trio. Jan. 16: **CONTINENTAL DRIFTERS** (featuring Peter Holsapple of the Dbs and Vicki Peterson of the Bangles). With the **CANDY BUTCHERS.** Jan. 17: **NANCY BOY.** Fronted by male model Donovan Leitch (you've probably seen his cheekbones on any number of crosstown buses), this glam combo traffics in the seventies-era castoffs of Mott the Hoople and David Bowie. They aren't very gifted—Leitch has a weedy voice and an irritatingly affected persona—but they look extremely convincing. Jan. 18: Jazz-funk from **MICHAEL RAY AND THE COSMIC KREWE** and New England psycho-klezmer-bluegrass from **HYPNOTIC CLAMBAKE.** On Jan. 19, an old-school hip-hop party with the **COLD CRUSH BROTHERS.**

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Guitarist and vocalist **JOHN PIZZARELLI'S** impudent goofiness brings a fresh breeze to the stuffy old Oak Room this month. An agile musician and a pleasant low-key crooner from the Chet Baker/Alfalfa school, he is solidly backed by his brother, Martin, on bass, and Ray Kennedy on piano, making this the best-sounding cabaret act in town. **ALEX DONNER** is in for four consecutive Mondays, starting Jan. 20, with his cabaret show "New York, My Home Town." Dining.

Birdland, 315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—The legendary club has a new address and bigger digs, and Charlie Parker's name still shines proudly on the awning and on the banner behind the stage. Jan. 15-16: **BOBBY WATSON,** the intrepid altoist, has spent the last few years investigating new routes, but now we can be thankful that he's reassembled **HORIZON,** always an invigorating forum for his neo-bop conceptions. Jan. 17-18: The **CHICO O'FARRILL** jazz orchestra. Arranger and bandleader O'Farrill, one of the grand architects of Afro-Cuban jazz, has made one of the most welcome comebacks of the late nineties. His balance of steaming Latin rhythms, fervid bop improvisation, and resonant horn charts is still as bracing as ever. Jan. 19: The **MARK VINCI** quartet. Jan. 20-21: **RUSSELL GUNN'S** hip-hop jazz sextet. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Jazz, mirrors, and a gift shop. Through Jan. 19: Japan's premier saxophonist, **SADAO WATANABE,** and his quartet share a bill with **MONTY ALEXANDER,** Jamaica's foremost jazz pianist, and his trio. Both musicians know their stuff, but each relies far too much on virtuosity to prove his authenticity. Starting Jan. 21: The **CLARK TERRY** quintet and the **HARRY (SWEETS) EDISON JAZZ ALL STARS.** Terry and Edison, two of the truly great mainstream trumpeters, couldn't be more different as players. Terry is garrulous and ebullient, sometimes alternating trumpet and flugelhorn in a single number to accommodate his verbosity. Edison is downright stingy with his notes, milking the expressive potential in each one dry before eking out another. That both men swing their tails off is one of the miraculous riddles of jazz. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and, for a two-month stint, the amazing **EARTHA KITT.** She is still a fierce and funny performer with a feral grip on her audience. At the end of a song she'll throw back her head and laugh, like some kind of carnivore after the kill; she chooses her victims from the front row, and when the show is over there's blood on the tables. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, pianist **PETER MINTUN** is in charge. A genuine throwback to a gentler time, this elegant performer specializes

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Ornette Coleman Sound Museum: Hidden Man (Harmolodic/Verve).
Ornette Coleman Sound Museum: Three Women (Harmolodic/Verve).
The Secret Sessions, Bill Evans (Milestone).
Joe Henderson Big Band (Verve).
New York Child, Marty Ehrlich (Enja).
The Complete Columbia Studio Recordings, Miles Davis and Gil Evans (Columbia, CDs; Mosaic, LPs).
Quiet, John Scofield (Verve).
My Foolish Heart, George Mraz (Milestone).
The Complete Blue Note Sixties Sessions, Dexter Gordon (Blue Note).
Turn Out the Stars, Bill Evans Trio (Warner Bros.).
Labyrinth, Tom Harrell (RCA Victor).
20th Century Piano Genius, Art Tatum (Verve).
Jelly Roll, Vernel Bagneris and Morten Gunnar Larsen (GHB Records).
Gerry Mulligan: The Complete Pacific Jazz Recordings of the Gerry Mulligan Quartet (Pacific Jazz).
Dreamland, Madeleine Peyroux (Atlantic).
"Doublebass" Delights, Michael Moore and Rufus Reid (Double-Time Records).
Snowy Morning Blues, James P. Johnson (GRP).
Blessed Quietness, Cyrus Chestnut (Atlantic).
The Birth of the Third Stream, Various Artists (Columbia Legacy).
Big Stuff, Larry Goldings (Warner Bros.).

in curios from the twenties and thirties. Agreeable and reassuring without being overgracious, he's sort of a curio himself.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through Jan. 18: The ELLIS MARSALIS trio. Marsalis—Big Daddy himself—is a model of pianistic decorum. The family name hasn't exactly been a drawback, but this elegant and supple stylist isn't riding on anybody's coattails. Starting Jan. 21: The WALLACE RONEY quintet, with GERI ALLEN. Dining.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Jan. 15-17: The SERGEY KURYOKHIN INTERNATIONAL INTERDISCIPLINARY FESTIVAL. Those paying tribute to the contemporary Russian avant-gardist by displaying their own left-leaning musical propositions will include the visionary pianist CECIL TAYLOR and ethnic merrymakers the KLEZMATICS, as well as JASON HWANG, MARK DRESSER, VLADIMIR TARASOV, ANDREW CYRILLE, BORIS RAYSKIN, GREGG BENDIAN, and GARY LUCAS. Jan. 19: Former Suicide front man ALAN VEGA. Starting Jan. 21: The HAN BENNINK DUET CONCERTS. There hasn't been a stylistic straitjacket yet designed that the madcap Dutch percussionist Bennink can't wriggle out of. He's as accomplished as he is witty, and his encounters on Jan. 21 with guitarist DAVE TRONZON (at 8) and avant-garde master drummer ANDREW CYRILLE (at 10) should be treats.

Maxim's, 680 Madison Ave. (751-5111)—In 1985, Pierre Cardin spent millions to open this mock-nineteenth-century bistro, which features stained glass, bevelled mirrors, and inlaid ceilings. But the eighties ended, and the club went dark for five years. A new management has revamped the menu, lowered the prices, and "done away with the dress code." Chanteuse MORGANA KING is in for two weeks starting Jan. 21. Dining.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—A plush, old-fashioned night club, sixty-five floors above it all, complete with Art Deco fixtures, intimate glitter, and a panoramic view as dizzying as the tab. In the ring for two weeks starting Jan. 21: TONY DANZA. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Rainbow Room, there's a revolving dance floor, plus swinging big-band music courtesy of the Rainbow Room Orchestra, featuring vocalists Sean Mahony and Claudette Sierra. Closed Mondays.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A convivial and crowded jazz club where the musicians are always top-shelf. Through Jan. 19: The CECIL MC BEE quartet. Bassist McBee's fingers could probably crack open walnuts. Now in his fourth decade as an A-list sideman, he also knows how to assemble his own first-rate bands, drawing on the myriad musicians he's played with over the years. These days, virtuosity is a given for bass players, but experiencing one of the masters at work can give the word new meaning. The JOHN HICKS trio (a quintet some nights) has the stage for a week starting Jan. 21. Dining.

Village Gate, 240 W. 52nd St. (307-5252)—The ROY GERSON quartet is in the midst of a two-week run. Dining.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through Jan. 19: With one foot in well-turned bop soil and the other in R. & B. territory, LOU DONALDSON, an alto saxophonist, pledges allegiance to both virtuosity and entertainment. He's got the credentials (he was a first-edition member of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, playing alongside Clifford Brown), and his timing—as a bop soloist and as a comic—has never been better. He's joined here by DR. LONNIE SMITH on the organ, PETER BERNSTEIN on guitar, and FUKUSHI TAINAKA on drums. Starting Jan. 21: WYCLIFFE GORDON and RONALD WESTRAY, with CYRUS CHESTNUT, STEVE KIRBY, and ALVESTER GARNETT. The VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA holds sway on Mondays.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—A rarity among jazz clubs: somewhere you'd go to eat even if there were no music. Through Jan. 18: MICHAEL MOORE (bass), KEN PEPLOWSKI (clarinet), and HOWARD ALDEN (guitar). Starting Jan. 20: RUFUS REID, a bass mainstay, will be joined by the promising young pianist ANTHONY WONSEY and guitarist RON JACKSON.

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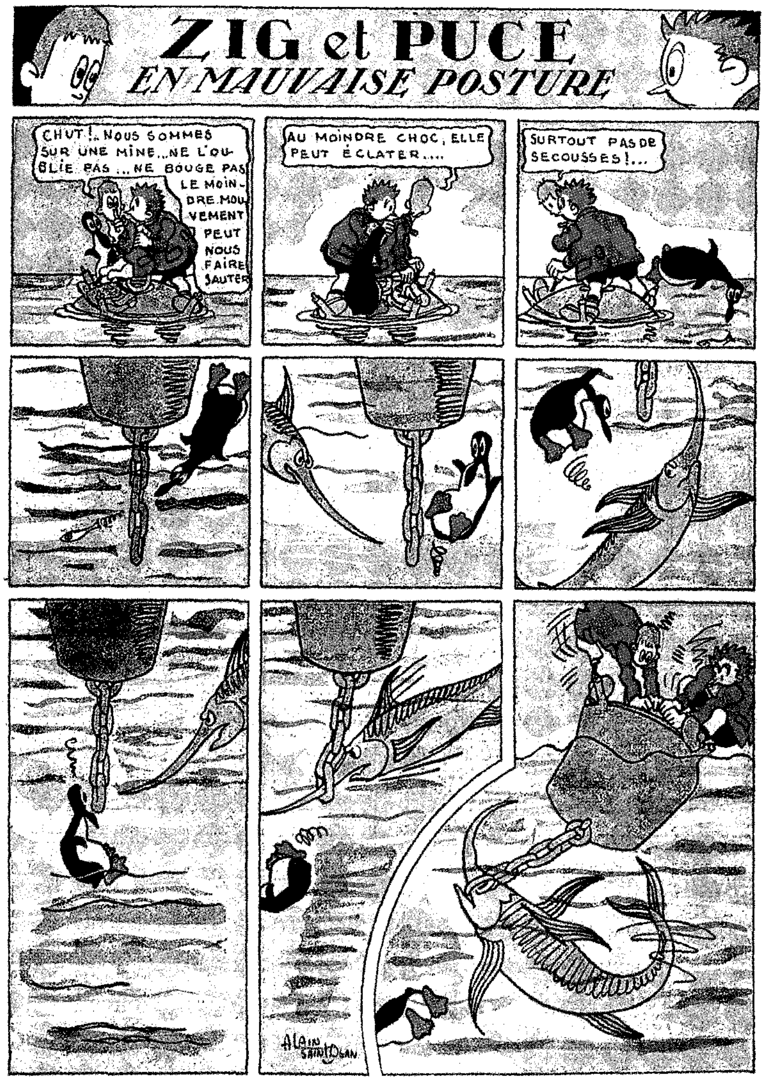
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AU MOINDRE CHOC, ELLE PEUT ÉCLATER....
SURTOUT PAS DE SECOUSSES!...
ALAIN SAINT OGAN

EUROPEAN COMICS: *An exhibition at Thread Waxing Space (476 Broadway; 966-9520) traces the bloodlines of Continental comic artistry, from books about the adventures of Tintin, Astérix, and Zig and Puce (the two thirties-era lads, above, stranded on a floating mine with a penguin friend) to works by such contemporary masters as Liberatore, Milo Manera, Joost Swarte, and Dupuy-Berbérian.*

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MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—The Costume Institute's much heralded "Christian Dior" blockbuster displays more than eighty opulent items from the decade beginning in 1947, when the designer first presented his influential New Look. Fifty years later, that silhouette's most startling aspect is the pelvis (padded into a breadbox shape), its most blissful achievement the surface simplicity of dresses elaborately handcrafted and structured within. Standouts include the "Aladin," a 1947 champagne-colored satin dinner dress that looks like a giant scarf casually draped; the 1949 "Black Swan" velvet-and-satin strapless ball gown, a swaggering archetype of glamour; a theatrical, vestmentlike pink evening coat made for Eva Perón in 1951; and a pair of truly to-die-for blue satin-and-lace sequin-embroidered evening boots by Roger Vivier, from 1957. Through March 23. . . . ¶ "Late Klee" showcases twenty seldom-seen drawings, paintings, and watercolors from 1925 to 1940, the last fifteen years of the artist's life, during which he was discredited by the Nazis, fired from his teaching job in Düsseldorf, and forced to return to his native Switzerland. The "Stricken City," of 1936, and the porcine "Angel Applicant," of 1939, are as grim as you might expect, but most of these works are not: uncharacteristically loose, portentously bold, and larger than usual, many of them have the artist's typical sweetness, whimsy, and exuberance. Through April 13. . . . ¶ "The Gods of War: Sacred Imagery and the Decoration of Arms and Armor," a thought-provoking installation of sixty-five beautiful objects of warfare. Through November. . . . ¶ The largest exhibition of the art of Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot mounted in more than a hundred years closes this Sunday. . . . ¶ The cynosure of a large exhibition surveying the career of the Scottish architect and designer Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928) must certainly be the restored Ladies' Luncheon Room from Miss Cranston's Ingram Street Tea Rooms, in Glasgow. Through Feb. 16. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—The Jasper Johns retrospective features two hundred and twenty-five works—paintings, drawings, prints, and sculptures—and naturally includes a few flags, targets, numerals, and cross-hatch patterns. Through Jan. 21. . . . ¶ Denise Marika's installation, "More Weight," features a video loop of nude figures projected onto a large rectangular metallic structure with layers of pink felt in the center. Through Jan. 26. . . . ¶ "New Photography 12" features work by Richard Billingham, Thomas Demand, Osamu Kanemura, Sophie Ristelhueber, Georgina Starr, and Wolfgang Tillmans. Through Feb. 4. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—"Ellsworth Kelly," a large survey of the artist's paintings, sculptures, works on paper, and photographs. Through Jan. 19. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway, at Prince St. (423-3500)—"The Hugo Boss Prize: 1996." The Guggenheim clearly had Britain's prestigious Turner Prize in mind when it established this award, named for the German menswear designer, and there can be no denying the merit of the inaugural-year short list: Laurie Anderson, Janine Antoni, Matthew Barney, Cai Guo Qiang, Stan Douglas, and Yasumasa Morimura. The artists were judged on the basis of their work as a whole, rather than on the strength of their installations here. That's a good thing for Barney, the winner, who bothered to submit only a few stills and props from his splendid video "Cremaster 1." In the show, however, Antoni comes off best, with "Slumber," a complex piece including a bed in which the artist sleeps each night, an electroencephalograph that records her brain-wave activity, and a loom on which she weaves her EEG patterns into a blanket: a compelling rereading of the myth of Penelope. The effect is riveting. Through Jan. 19. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—"Making Mischief," an excellent exhibition chronicling the Dada invasion of New York, from the Great War through the early twenties. Chief among its attractions is a significant selection of pieces by Marcel Duchamp, including a painstaking reconstruction (recently made by Swedish scholars) of his masterpiece "The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even," also known as the "Large Glass." As often happens at the Whitney, some American artists have been shoehorned into an exhibit they have no business in. Still, the material is fascinating and very well presented. Louise and Walter Arensberg's salon has been reconstructed with a full-size photographic mural and many of the original paintings (by Cézanne, Duchamp, Braque, and others) hanging in their proper places. Through Feb. 23. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St. (769-5100)—The renovated Hall of Vertebrate Origins is open, its dropped ceiling removed to reveal Calvert Vaux's skylit design. All the better to see the dunkleosteus, a sixteen-foot-long hanging model of an armored fish, based on the four-foot-long fossil of its head, with self-sharpening jawbones. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—The museum's extensive Chinese collection has handsome new quarters in which a careful, lucid presentation offers a broad look at the art of the Middle Kingdom, from Neolithic stone carvings to blue-and-white ceramics of the late Ch'ing dynasty. . . . ¶ "The Evidence of Things Not Seen: Drawings by Glenn Ligon." Through Jan. 19. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St. (517-2742)—"Contemporary Art in Asia: Traditions/Tensions." The best work in this superb show manages to avoid mimicking the vernacular of Western modernism and postmodernism by drawing upon traditional forms. "Lingga-Yoni," an assemblage by the Indonesian sculptor Nindityo Adipurnomo, takes the Hindu icon of the male and female sex organs and neatly flips it, encasing a delicately decorated lingam in a rough box representing the yoni. N. N. Rimzon's crudely rendered image of a Jain deity menaced by massive swords makes its statement with unapologetic simplicity. Through Feb. 2. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Dia Center for the Arts, 548 W. 22nd St. (989-5912)—"A Place Called Abroad," a remarkable installation by the Spanish artist Juan Muñoz, whose work could be characterized as George Segal meets Michael Asher: the implicit expressionism of the anguished human figure, ominously frozen, is perversely wedded to a deconstructivist architectural critique. . . . ¶ Minimalist sculptures, of the barely visible variety, by Fred Sandback. (Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (423-3200)—"From Court Jews to the Rothschilds: Art, Patronage, and Power, 1600-1800." Through Jan. 19. (Open Sundays through Thursdays, 11 to 5:45, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Museo del Barrio, Fifth Ave. at 104th St. (831-7272)—"Santos: Sculptures Between Heaven and Earth," a modest but excellent exhibition of Caribbean devotional figures, which will be on permanent display. The show includes some fifty Puerto Rican *santos*—small statues of Jesus, the Virgin, the Magi, and various saints—mostly from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many were intended for little altars in kitchens or bedrooms; hence, despite the traditional iconography, they speak most powerfully of local, often humble circumstances. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St. (534-1672)—"New York Toy Stories" is a thoroughly delightful collection of some three hundred playthings, both homemade and commercially produced, from the past two centuries. In keeping with the urban emphasis, almost all are indoor toys. Eloise, that quintessentially overprivileged New York child, has a case to herself. One doll has the tiniest kitchen accessories imaginable; another, made of a clothespin and a napkin, reminds us that anything, viewed in a playful spirit, can be a toy. There are rocking horses and roller skates, carved sheep and lead soldiers, spectacular teething rings and rattles, board games, antique building blocks, handcrafted slingshots and shooters, familiar friends like the yo-yo and the Slinky, and fascinating discoveries like the phrenakistascopes (pinwheel-like gadgets with little slits to look through at animated scenes). Allow plenty of time, even if you're not taking kids. Through April 27. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (369-4880)—"Theodore Clement Steele: An American Master of Light." After returning from his apprenticeship in Germany in 1885, Steele, the Indiana-born landscape painter, lightened up—literally. This exhibit chronicles the transformation from his fuliginous Sturm-und-Drang period to a brighter and looser Hoosier Impressionism. Through March 9. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5; Friday evenings until 8, with no admission charge after 5.)

The New Museum, 583 Broadway, between Houston and Prince Sts. (219-1222)—"Up To and Including Her Limits." Carolee Schneemann, an important precursor of the body-art movement, is the focus of this small but well-mounted retrospective, which ranges from early, funky assemblages incorporating broken mirrors and dead birds to photomontages and videos that document such major performance pieces as the infamous "Meat Joy." Performed in 1964, "Meat Joy" had a cast of nine men and women who stripped down and writhed ecstatically as they pelted one another with mackerels, plucked chickens, and hot dogs, and rubbed them against their naked bodies as they painted themselves. Through Jan. 26. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6; Saturday evenings until 8, with no admission charge after 6.)

New-York Historical Society, 2 W. 77th St., at Central Park W. (873-3400)—"Scaasi: The Joy of Dressing Up," a large retrospective studded with examples of the designer's entrance-making couture. Through Feb. 9. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. (869-8089)—Part II of "The Hand of the Poet" presents original manuscripts by the likes of Cummings, Moore, Merrill, Auden, Bishop, Lowell, Moss, Nabokov, and Sexton. Through Feb. 15. (Berg Collection. Closed Mondays.) . . . ¶ "Artful Interiors: Rooms with a View" explores, through architectural books and design guides, the history of interior design from 1750 to 1950. Through March 29. (Salomon Room.) (Open Mondays, and Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, uptown and downtown galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6; Chelsea galleries are generally closed Tuesdays and open Sundays.)

Gordon Cook (1927-85)—Forty-one small-scale, pleasingly surrealistic works in various mediums, most of them from the last year of the artist's life. Nearly all are "stick figures"—human beings represented as limbs and (minimal) heads of grained wood, precisely rendered—but many manage, through posture or gesture, to suggest an individual personality. Through Feb. 1. (Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St. 888-1122.)

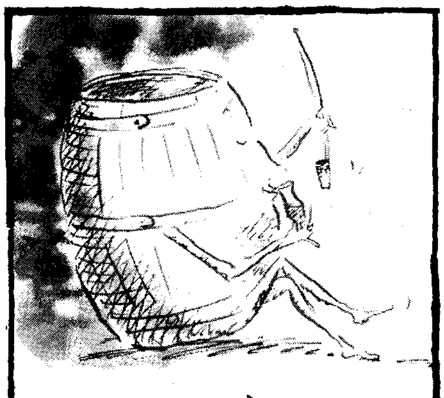
David Dewey—Seventeen not particularly ambitious watercolors of buildings in Maine (where the artist summers), many rendered against disconcertingly bright-blue skies. The work is full of rhythm, and the off-center strangeness of the compositions often redeems what would otherwise be mere prettiness. Sometimes the looseness is pleasing; sometimes it seems a bit perfunctory. Through Jan. 30. (Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St. 664-0907.)

Mark Francis—Eight large, strikingly original images, chiefly based on microphotographs of cells and chromosomes, by a young Irish-born and London-based artist; this is his first solo New York show. The austere, glowing beauty of the paintings, all done last year—mostly in variously shaded blacks on variously shaded whites—presents a decidedly seductive view of biological process. Through Feb. 22. (Boone, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 752-2929.)

Leon Polk Smith (1906-96)—Though all sixteen of the large, bold, spare geometric paintings in this show are from the present decade, some look a little dated now, especially the Op-art-like black-on-gray works segregated in a small room off the main gallery. Yet there is a freshness to the daring simplicity of several of the others, especially three bright tondos called "Events" (in orange, blue, and green) and "Big Space-Black Line," a bottom-heavy chevron in black on a white canvas. The artist died last month, at the age of ninety. Through Feb. 8. (McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. 319-1996. Open Mondays.)

George Wexler—The eleven recent landscapes here, most representing the environs of New Paltz, New York, where the artist has lived for more than forty years, look as though they were painted from photographs; in fact, several are composite views. There is something unfriendly about their detailed matte surfaces and their gloomily subdued pastel palettes, yet the pictures offer some subtle pleasures, especially in their oddly dainty renderings of water and foliage. Through Feb. 1. (Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St. 759-2345.)

Zao Wou-Ki—Extensive training in the brush techniques of his native China gave this Paris-based artist an unusual grounding for Western abstraction; the twenty inventive Chinese-ink paintings in this delicious show



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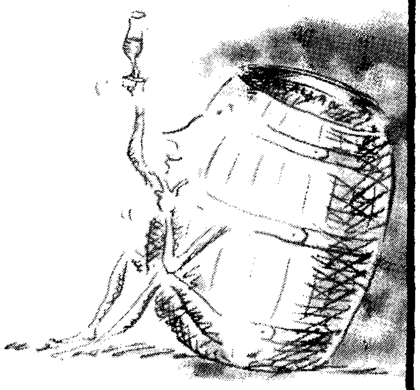

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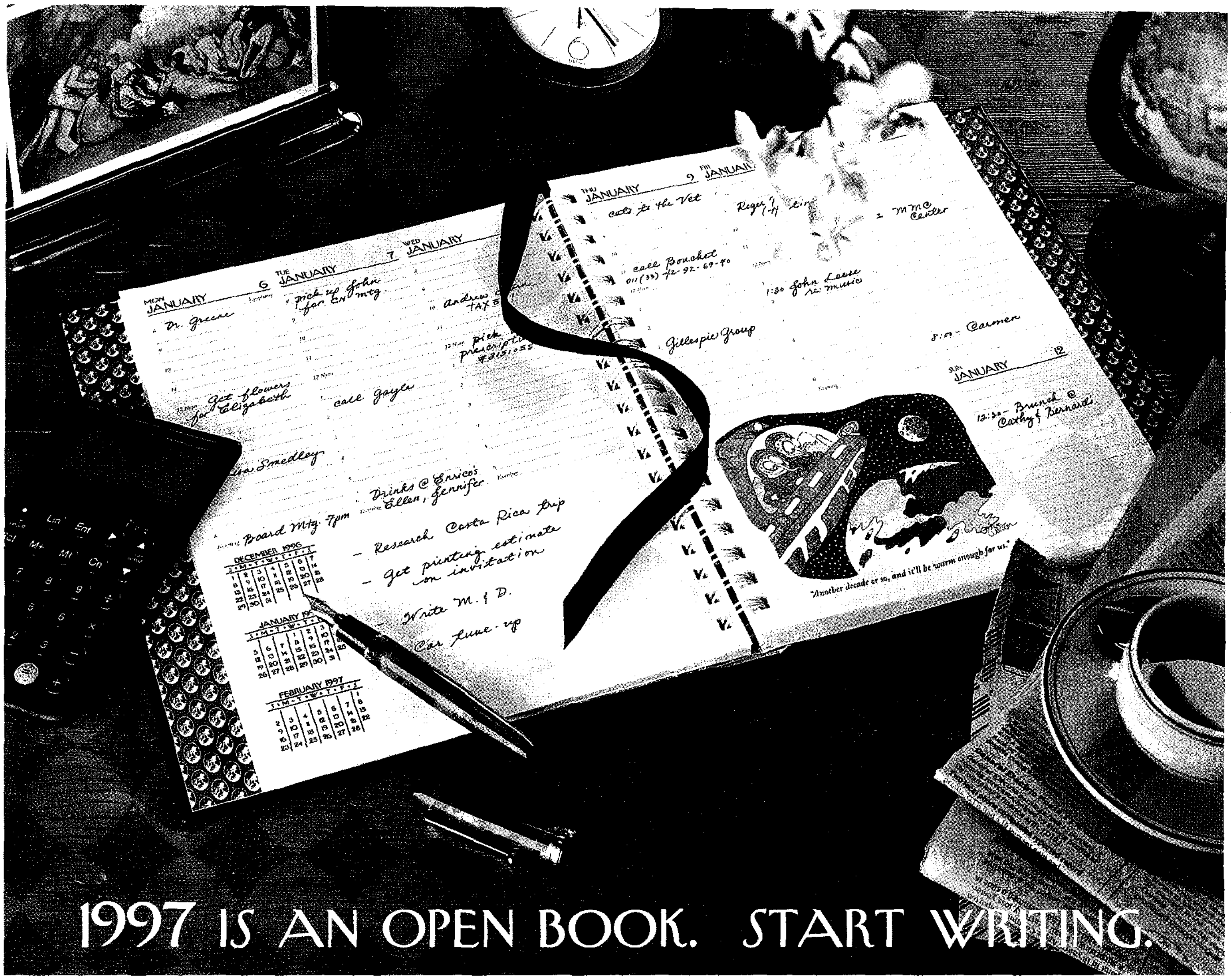
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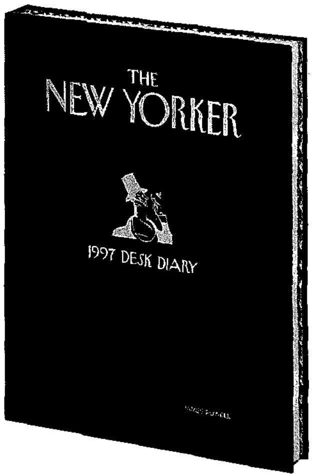
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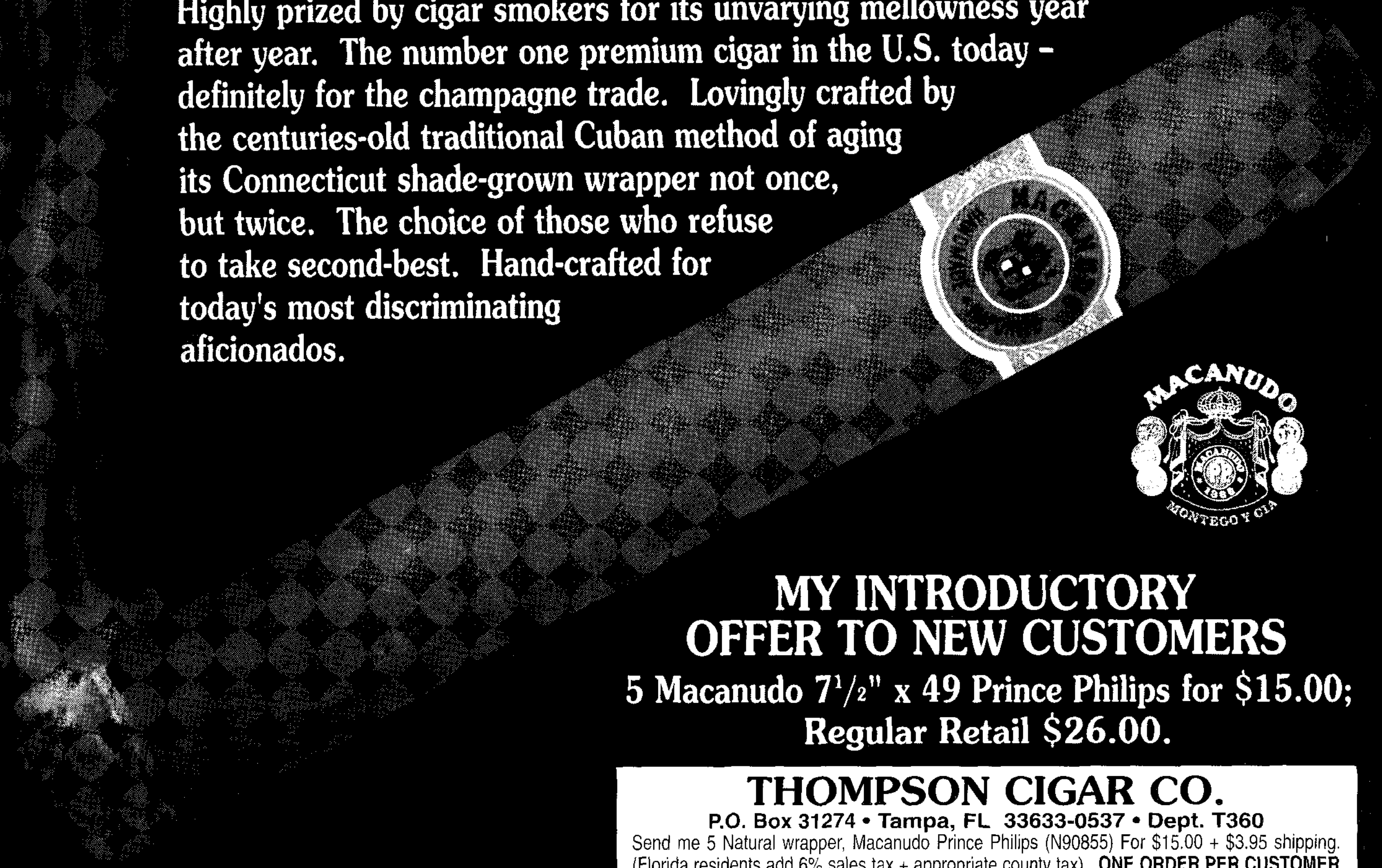

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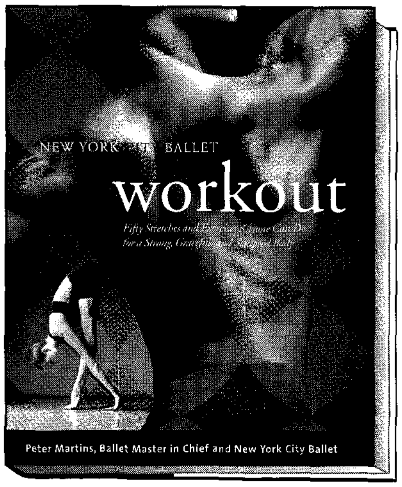
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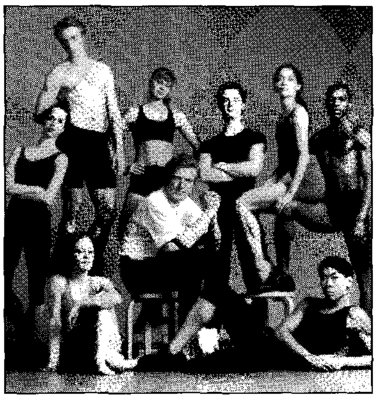

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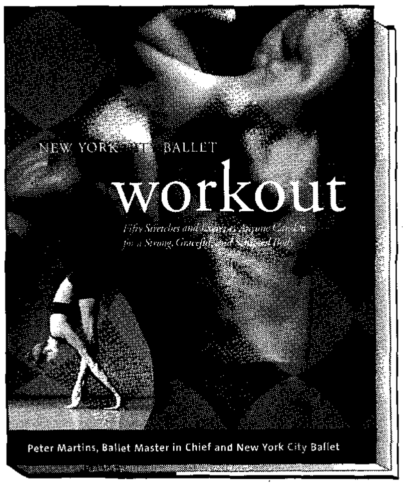
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ONLY CONNECT

Moscow Channel (http://www.moscowchannel.com)—Even as newspapers in the former Soviet Union are learning the heretofore undreamed-of art and business of reporting the news, their circulations are declining: these former tools of propaganda have apparently left the public jaded. Internet use is on the rise, however, with new Russian-language Web sites appearing daily. The nascent Moscow Channel—a clean, linear offering designed in the style of Suck or Word—is an English-language site brought to us via a New York server, but it has been built in the same enterprising spirit as those pioneering Russian sites. Its mission: to bring forth new writing, art, and conjecture from and about Russia, as well as to provide "a glimpse of the Internet revolution from the other hemisphere."

A feature on the Russian illustrator Vladimir Kovenatsky (1938-86) sets the tone. Reproductions of his drawings and linocuts limn a world both surreal and dreary: in one drawing, aliens emerge from a flying saucer only to wind up standing in line for beer. Though Kovenatsky is here compared to such Americans as Art Spiegelman and R. Crumb, the resonances are both deeper and uniquely Russian, evoking Babel as well as Chagall. Most of the site's other stories are more contemporary, though no less bizarre. A report in a section called Flash focusses on aspects of last year's Presidential election which the citizenry might prefer to forget: the rapper Hammer singing "I got the funk" to Yeltsinites, the ultranationalist Vladimir Zhirinovsky offering to father a child in every republic of the former U.S.S.R. And, though the past is not neglected (a "Leobot" will answer your queries in the words of Count Tolstoy; Joseph Brodsky is remembered, only semi-fondly, by his peers), the Moscow Channel is forward-looking. Phone companies in Russia are attempting to levy a surcharge on folks with modems, and to those netizens the question "Who will control the Internet?" is not just speculative. It was, after all, the modem and the fax that brought the world news of the attempted putsch in 1991 as Soviet television broadcast "Swan Lake."

Short List—**CHESTER ARNOLD,** Adams, 41 W. 57th St. 644-5665. Through Jan. 31. . . . **GARY BROTMEYER,** *Ubu, 16 E. 78th St. 794-4444. Through* March 1. . . . **DAN FLAVIN** and **KAZIMIR MALEVICH,** Danese, 41 E. 57th St. 223-2227. Both shows through Feb. 8. . . . **YVONNE JACQUETTE** and **LOUIS LOZOWICK,** Ryan, 24 W. 57th St. 397-0669. Both shows through Feb. 8. . . . **PHILIP SHERROD,** Stone, 113 E. 90th St. 988-6870. Through Jan. 31. . . . **PATTI SMITH,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. 980-5454. Through Feb. 8. . . . **NIELE TORONI,** Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. 977-7160. Open Mondays; through Feb. 15. . . . **JIMMY WRIGHT** and **JACK BUSH,** DC Moore, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 247-2111. Both shows through Feb. 1.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

William Wood—Abstract grisailles whose repetitive, vaguely organic forms suggest images in an electron microscope. They're quite beautiful, and, like the paintings of David Reed and Gerhard Richter, they remain somewhat mysterious in the way they achieve their formal effects. Through Jan. 25. (Kirkland, 504 W. 22nd St. 627-3930. *Opens Sundays at noon.)*

Short List—**STEPHEN DI CILLO** and **JULIE LANGSAM,** Clementine, 526 W. 26th St. 243-5937. Both shows through Jan. 26. . . . **JEFF NELSON,** Greene Naftali, 526 W. 26th St. 463-7770. Opens at noon; through Feb. 2.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

William W. Adkins—Patent designs, in ballpoint pen on poster board, by an inventor who lives in a shack and believes he is working for the military. The black-and-white drawings—plans for such quixotic gizmos as a "Hot Burning Sand Cuff" and a "Bevelled Rasp Sack"—are bold, obsessive, and neatly annotated with indecipherable specifications. The gallery's exhibition guide contains the artist's explanations ("This set-up is a corn gamble. You play out the water bucket with corn and sponges. You win if your honk sponge matches the size of your vehicle horn"), his endearingly absurd price list (from seventy-eight hundred to forty-four billion dollars), and other nobly crackpot touches that do not appear to be ironic. Through Feb. 1. (Ricco/Maresca, 152 Wooster St. 780-0071.)

Deborah Butterfield—Nine horses, fashioned from scrap metal, rusted pipe, and bronze casts of driftwood, brambles, thorny sticks—it looks as if the sculptor can make any old piece of junk describe a horse. Her descriptions vary according to the material: in one work, a hunk of driftwood captures the saddle-smooth curve of spine; in another, a steel tread from an industrial stairway serves as a muscular haunch. The looseness of such associations gives the work a freehand quality, as if, in her travels, Butterfield had picked up lines from Degas drawings instead of branches and bent metal slats. Through Jan. 18. (Thorp, 103 Prince St. 431-6880.)

Stan Douglas—Two early installations by the Canadian artist: "Onomatopoeia" (1985-86), which incorporates a working player piano, and "Deux Devises" (1983), which sets spare slide projections against recorded music. Like the artist's subsequent work, they employ conceptually derived strategies suffused with quasi-romantic melancholy; this poeticizing vein represents an important aspect in the recent development of conceptualism. The show also includes some altogether drier photo/text pieces. Through Jan. 25. (Zwirner, 43 Greene St. 966-9074.)

Ed Lipski—Stark and scary sculptures a child might dream up: a black fake-leather balloon, a beakless giant black bird, an aggressively ill-tempered banner (". . . I saw a bird and it was bad and I went to the sea and it was bad . . ."). Lipski creates an air of infantile menace which is, literally, hard to shake: at the door, a boy-size manikin—nicely dressed but with a black smiley face pasted where his features should be—extends his hand in greeting. Through Jan. 31. (In Khan, 415 West Broadway. 226-6484.)

Short List—**MARINA ABRAMOVIC,** Sean Kelly, 43 Mercer St. 343-2405. Through Feb. 15. . . . **CHARLES ARNOLDI,** Cowles, 420 West Broadway. 925-3500. Through Jan. 25. . . . **BARRY X BALL,** Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St. 219-9600. Through Feb. 8. . . . **ALAN BELCHER,** Shainman, 560 Broadway. 966-3866. Through Feb. 8. . . . **BRIDGET BUSUTIL,** Wickiser, 568 Broadway. 941-1817. Through Jan. 23. . . . **NANCY CHUNN,** Feldman, 31 Mercer St. 226-3232. Through Feb. 15. . . . **FELIX GONZALEZ-TORRES,** Rosen, 130 Prince St. 941-0203. Through Jan. 25. . . . **ELLEN HARVEY,** Limbo Café, 47 Avenue A, at 4th St. 477-5271. Through Feb. 3. . . . **ROBERT MORRIS,** Castelli, 420 West Broadway. 431-5160. Through Feb. 8. . . . **NABIL NAHAS,** Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. 431-3685. Through Feb. 15. . . . **CLAES OLDENBURG,** Inglett, 100 Wooster St. 343-0573.

Through Feb. 22. . . . **SHERYL RUBINSTEIN,** Bridgewater/Lustberg, 560 Broadway. 941-6355. Through Feb. 8. . . . **ROBERT SMITHSON** and **MASSIMO ANTONACI,** Weber, 142 Greene St. 966-6115. Both shows through Feb. 8. . . . **JOAN WHEELER,** Knowlton, 568 Broadway. 966-2625. Through Jan. 25. . . . **ROBERT WHITMAN,** Pace Wildenstein, 142 Greene St. 431-9224. Through Feb. 8. . . . **FRANK WIMBERLEY,** June Kelly, 591 Broadway. 226-1660. Through Feb. 5. . . . **BETTY WOODMAN,** Protetch, 560 Broadway. 966-5454. Through Feb. 8. . . . **GAVIN ZEIGLER,** Levitan, 42 Grand St. 966-2782. Through Jan 25.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

SOTHEBY'S—A series of Americana sales, including furniture, paintings, outsider art, and an unusual collection of samplers and other pieces of needlework. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000. Jan. 16-19.)

CHRISTIE'S—American furniture, folk art, silver, prints, and decorative arts. (Park Ave. at 59th St. 546-1000. Jan. 18.)

DOYLE'S—Victorian, Art Nouveau, and Art Deco art, mostly from a single Houston estate. (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730. Jan. 15.)

SWANN'S—An auction of more than three hundred books about books. (104 E. 25th St. 254-4710. Jan. 16.)

WINTER ANTIQUES SHOW—The forty-third installment of this popular annual event. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. Jan. 17-26, with a benefit opening on Jan. 16. For information, call 718-292-7392.)

"ANTIQUES AT THE OTHER ARMORY"—A hundred dealers offer fine and decorative art, furniture, textiles, and what have you. (69th Regiment Armory, Lexington Ave. at 25th St. Jan. 17-19. For information, call 255-0020. . . . **NOTE:** A free shuttle bus will link this show with its tonier counterpart uptown.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

RUDY BURCKHARDT—A selection of vintage New York City views by the eighty-two-year-old photographer and painter. Through Feb. 8. (De Nagy, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 262-5050.)

BRUCE DAVIDSON—"American Photographs," a survey of the artist's career, including pictures of a Brooklyn gang, residents of Spanish Harlem, subway riders, civil-rights demonstrators, and Central Park. Through Feb. 22. (Houk Friedman, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. 628-5300.)

YASUHIRO ISHIMOTO—Thirty black-and-white photographs made in Chicago between 1950 and 1961. The subject matter includes children with masks, cars, bathers, and street scenes. In the small gallery there is a complementary selection of works by Ishimoto's Chicago teachers Harry Callahan and Aaron Siskind. Both shows through Feb. 22. (Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. 226-1220.)

JEAN KALLINA—Coolly atmospheric black-and-white interiors taken in a French château, a Nova Scotia fishing shack, and elsewhere. Through Jan. 19. (Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766.)

JEANNE MOUTOUSSAMY-ASHE—Eloquent as they are, the photographer's understated, often melancholy portraits from the seventies and eighties—Miss Mary presiding in her South Carolina kitchen, a pensive young girl gazing out a screen door—don't prepare you for the devastation of this shows's final pictures: "Daddy and Me" (1991), a silhouetted Arthur Ashe (the photographer's husband) playing with his daughter, and "Father and Daughter" (1993), taken at the tennis player's funeral. Through Jan. 25. (Leica, 670 Broadway. 777-3051. Opens Saturdays at noon.)

HERB RITTS—A survey of the fashion photographer's portraits, glamour work, and nudes. Through Feb. 22. (Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway. 966-6223.)

WALTER ROSENBLUM—Vintage prints of the artist's New York and Second World War photographs. Through March 1. (Mann, 42 E. 76th St. 570-1223.)

"MAKING PICTURES: WOMEN AND PHOTOGRAPHY, 1975-NOW"—Part II of this smart survey features work by Eleanor Antin, Sophie Calle, Louise Lawler, Sherrie Levine, Elaine Reichek, and Carrie Mae Weems. Through Jan. 18. (Klagsbrun, 80 Mercer St. 925-5157.)

"PHOTOGRAPHY FROM THE BEGINNING"—Three historical surveys, from the collections of the Galerie Alain Paviot (Paris), the Galerie Rudolf Kicken (Cologne and Berlin), and the Robert Miller gallery. Among the photographers represented are Eugène Atget, Jan Groover, George Platt Lynes, László Moholy-Nagy, and Frantisek Drtikol. Through Feb. 8. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. 980-5454.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY MIDTOWN, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. (860-1777)—"Roadworks," a large selection of black-and-white prints by Linda McCartney. Through Feb. 9. . . . ¶ "All Zones Off Peak: Photographs of Liverpool by Tom Wood." Through Feb. 9. . . . ¶ "A Celebration of 25 Years of Light Gallery." Through Feb. 9. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

SHORT LIST—**JUAN CARLOS ALOM,** Throckmorton, 153 E. 61st St. 223-1059. Through Feb. 1. . . . **ERNST BRUNNER,** Swiss Institute, 495 Broadway, at Spring St. 925-2035. Through Feb. 8. . . . **DAN BUDNICK,** Uma, 30 W. 57th St. 757-7240. Through Jan. 24. . . . **DARREL ELLIS,** Art in General, 79 Walker St. 219-0473. Opens at noon; through Jan. 25. . . . **ROBERT FLYNT** and **MICHAEL VON GRAFFENRIED,** Witkin, 415 West Broadway. 925-5510. Both shows through Feb. 15. . . . **JOHN GRUEN,** McGrath, 20 W. 57th St. 956-3366. Through Feb. 8. . . . **SHANDOR HASSAN,** O.K. Harris, 383 West Broadway. 431-3600. Through Feb. 1. . . . **DUANE MICHALS,** Janis, 110 W. 57th St. 586-0110. Through Feb. 1. . . . **ANA MARIA NICHOLSON,** Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St. 759-2345. Through Feb. 1. . . . **BARBARA POLLACK,** Holly Solomon, 172 Mercer St. 941-5777. Through Feb. 8. . . . **FAWN POTASH,** Gallery 292, 120 Wooster St. 431-0292. Through Jan. 18.

(See the museum listings for a photography exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art.)

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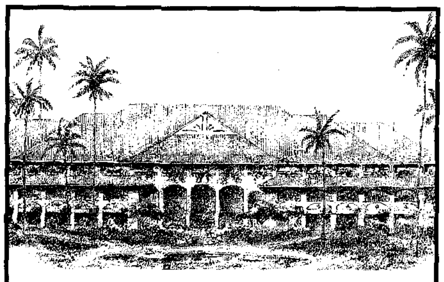

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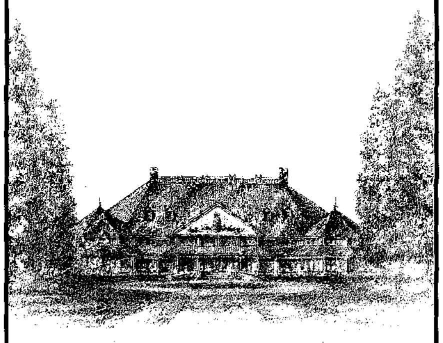

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OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**la bohème,** with Patricia Racette, Gwynne Geyer, Marcello Giordani, and Anthony Michaels-Moore; conducted by Nello Santi. (Jan. 15 at 7:30.) . . . With Maria Spacagna, Ms. Geyer, Vladimir Grishko, and Haijing Fu; Mr. Santi. (Jan. 18 at 8.) . . . **cavalleria rusticana** and **pagliacci,** with Dolora Zajick, Fabio Armiliato, and Bruno Pola in the former, and Diana Soviero, Johan Botha, and Juan Pons in the latter; Simone Young conducts both. (Jan. 16 at 8.) . . . With Leo Nucci instead of Mr. Pons. (Jan. 21 at 8.) . . . **i puritani,** with Ruth Ann Swenson, Stuart Neill, Thomas Hampson, and Alastair Miles; Edoardo Müller. (Jan. 17 at 8.) . . . **la traviata,** with Veronica Villarroel, Vincenzo La Scola, and Roberto Frontali; Maurizio Barbacini. (Jan. 18 at 1:30.) . . . **le nozze di figaro,** with Hei-Kyung Hong, Barbara Bonney, Dawn Upshaw, James Morris, and Michele Pertusi; Leopold Hager. (Jan. 20 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—Kurt Masur conducts Dvořák's "The Devil and Kate" Overture and his Violin Concerto (with Maxim Vengerov), as well as Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 2 (the "Little Russian"). (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Jan. 15-16 and Jan. 18 at 8, and Jan. 17 at 2.)

New York Chamber Symphony—John Fiore leads David Diamond's "Romeo and Juliet" and Haydn's Symphony No. 100; cellist Janos Starker is featured in Fauré's "Elégie" and Tchaikovsky's "Variations on a Rococo Theme." (Alice Tully Hall. Jan. 18 at 8 and Jan. 19 at 5.)

"Elijah"—Mendelssohn's oratorio will have been scrutinized in a weeklong workshop before it arrives on Carnegie Hall's stage, where Robert Shaw will direct workshop participants and his own Festival Chorus, the Orchestra of St. Luke's, and soloists Dominique Labelle (soprano), Marietta Simpson (mezzo-soprano), Richard Clement (tenor), and Thomas Hampson (baritone) in an English translation of the work. (Jan. 19 at 2.)

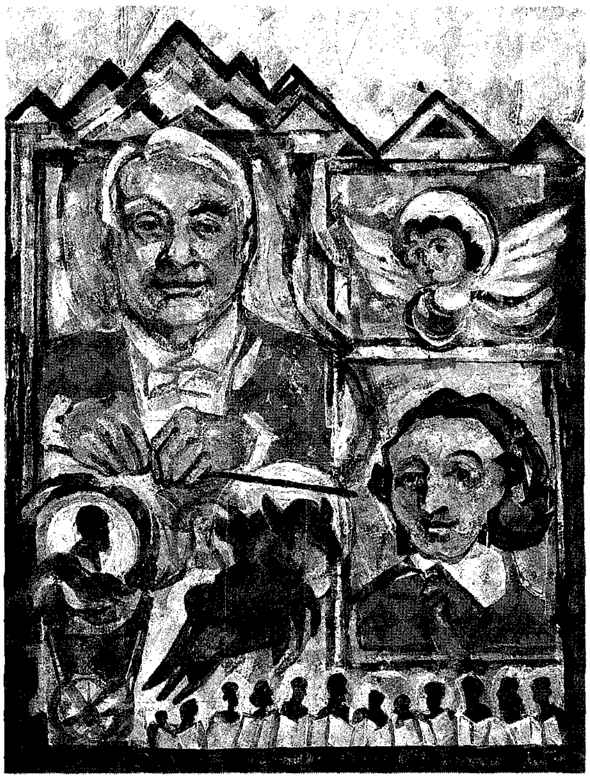
Downtown Chamber Orchestra—Mimi Stern-Wolfe conducts short symphonic works by Copland and Bernstein. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Jan. 19 at 2.)

National Youth Orchestra—Lukas Foss conducts Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5; Jonathan Willcocks directs a massed chorus in a work of his own as well as in John Rutter's Gloria. (Carnegie Hall. Jan. 19 at 9.)

Jupiter Symphony—Pianist Seymour Lipkin is featured in Franck's "Symphonic Variations" and Weber's Konzertstück. Jens Nygaard conducts the program, which also includes Mozart's Symphony No. 35 (the "Haffner") and the première of Robert Miller's "Reflections on the Last Idealism" (a tribute to John Fitzgerald Kennedy). (Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, 152 W. 66th St. Jan. 20 at 2 and 7 and Jan. 21 at 8. For information about tickets, call 799-1259.)

Eos Ensemble—Jonathan Sheffer leads a mini-festival at Alice Tully Hall which contrasts Baroque works with pieces by modern minimalists. Jan. 20 at 8: Pärt's "Tabula Rasa," Reich's "Eight Lines," Glass's Violin Concerto (with Eric Wyrick), and Handel's dramatic cantata "Lucrezia" (semi-staged, and featuring soprano Juliana Gondek). . . . ¶ Jan. 22 at 8: Mr. Sheffer's transcriptions of movements from Bach's "Well-Tempered Clavier," plus two works by Adams: "Shaker Loops" and Act III of the opera "Nixon in China." . . . **note:** An inter-arts panel will consider the festival's repertoire at a symposium on Jan. 21 at 8, at the Paula Cooper gallery, 534 W. 21st St.; for ticket information, call 721-6500.

Philadelphia Orchestra—Franz Welser-Möst leads Dukas's "The Sorcerer's Apprentice," Mozart's Oboe Concerto (featuring Richard Woodhams, the orchestra's principal oboist), Milhaud's "Le Boeuf sur le Toit," and Ravel's "Boléro." (Carnegie Hall. Jan. 21 at 8.)



"Elijah," directed by Robert Shaw, at Carnegie Hall.

BONNY OMARA

RECITALS

Vocal Cornucopia—Two days of master classes with mezzo-sopranos Marilyn Horne and Christa Ludwig culminate in an evening of songs by Barber, Schubert, Dvořák, Britten, and Vaughan Williams (among others), featuring baritone Thomas Hampson and four singers currently benefitting from the largesse of Ms. Horne's vocal foundation: soprano Jane Jennings, mezzo-soprano Pamela Pantos, countertenor David Daniels, and baritone Marcus DeLoach. (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. For information about tickets, call 769-7406. Jan. 15 at 7:30.)

New York Festival of Song—Aspects of modern American life, from birth to marriage to death, are the topic of art songs by (among others) Bernstein, Bolcom, Rorem, and Lowell Liebermann (whose song cycle "Appalachian Liebeslieder" receives its première). (Weill Recital Hall. Jan. 15 at 8.)

Bargemusic—Violinist Ani Kavafian, violist Paul Neubauer, and cellist Ronald Thomas play chamber music by Françaix and Mozart. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061. Jan. 16 at 7:30 and Jan. 19 at 4.)

Arcadian Academy—Nicholas McGegan leads his chamber players and soprano Christine Brandes in music from Baroque Italy—specifically, sonatas and cantatas by Albinoni, Vivaldi, Salamone Rossi, Isabella Leonarda, Giovanni Legrenzi, Dario Castello, and

Baldassare Galuppi. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Jan. 16 at 8.)

Concert Royal—Members of the period-instrument group perform all twelve concertos of Vivaldi's "L'Estro Armonico," featuring violinist Judson Griffin. The curiously named collection—"Harmonic Estrus," or perhaps "Harmony in Heat"—stands as a bridge between the classic concerto-grosso style of Corelli and the essentially modern concerto of Bach and his followers. Published in Amsterdam in 1711, the collection became Vivaldi's breakthrough to the transalpine musical world, proving wildly successful in northern musical capitals; in fact, more than half of the ten Vivaldi concertos that Bach selected to transcribe for keyboard instruments come from this set. (Landon gallery, 1926 Broadway, at 64th St., third floor. 721-1716. Jan. 16 at 8.)

Chamber Music Society of the Institute—Presenting works by Mozart (his Oboe Quartet), Beethoven (his C-Minor Piano Trio and "Là ci darem" Variations), Virko Baley (a new cello solo), and Schumann (his Piano Quartet). (Ukrainian Institute, 2 E. 79th St. 288-8660. Jan. 18 at 8.)

St. Petersburg String Quartet—At Merkin Concert Hall. Jan. 18 at 8: In its New York début recital, the foursome offers Tchaikovsky's Quartet No. 2, Zurab Nadarejshvili's Quartet No. 1, and Natalya Medvedovskaya's Quartet No. 1. . . . ¶ Jan. 21 at 2: The Tchaikovsky and Medvedovskaya works as above, plus Borodin's Quartet No. 2. (129 W. 67th St. 501-3330.)

Liran Avni and **Eleonor Bindman**—The two pianists share a program, with Mr. Avni offering Liszt's B-Minor Sonata and Ms. Bindman performing Brahms's "Handel Variations." (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 718-885-2478. Jan. 19 at noon.)

Bachmann-Klibonoff-Fridman Trio—Performing piano trios by Mozart (in E Major, K. 542), Beethoven (the "Ghost"), and Mendelssohn (in C Minor). (Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E. 65th St. 734-2130. Jan. 19 at 3.)

Salon Soirées—Chamber music by Mozart and Chopin, in a second-floor music room. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Jan. 19 at 6 and 8. No tickets necessary.)

Mendelssohn String Quartet—Violist Robert Mann and cellist Laurence Lesser assist the foursome in sextets by Brahms (in G Major), Strauss (the sextet from "Capriccio"), and Tchaikovsky (his "Souvenir de Florence"). (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Jan. 19 at 7.)

Mindy Kaufman—Flutist, with pianist Ilan Rechtman, performing music by Vivaldi, Sammartini, and others. (Mansfield Hotel, 12 W. 44th St. Jan. 20 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

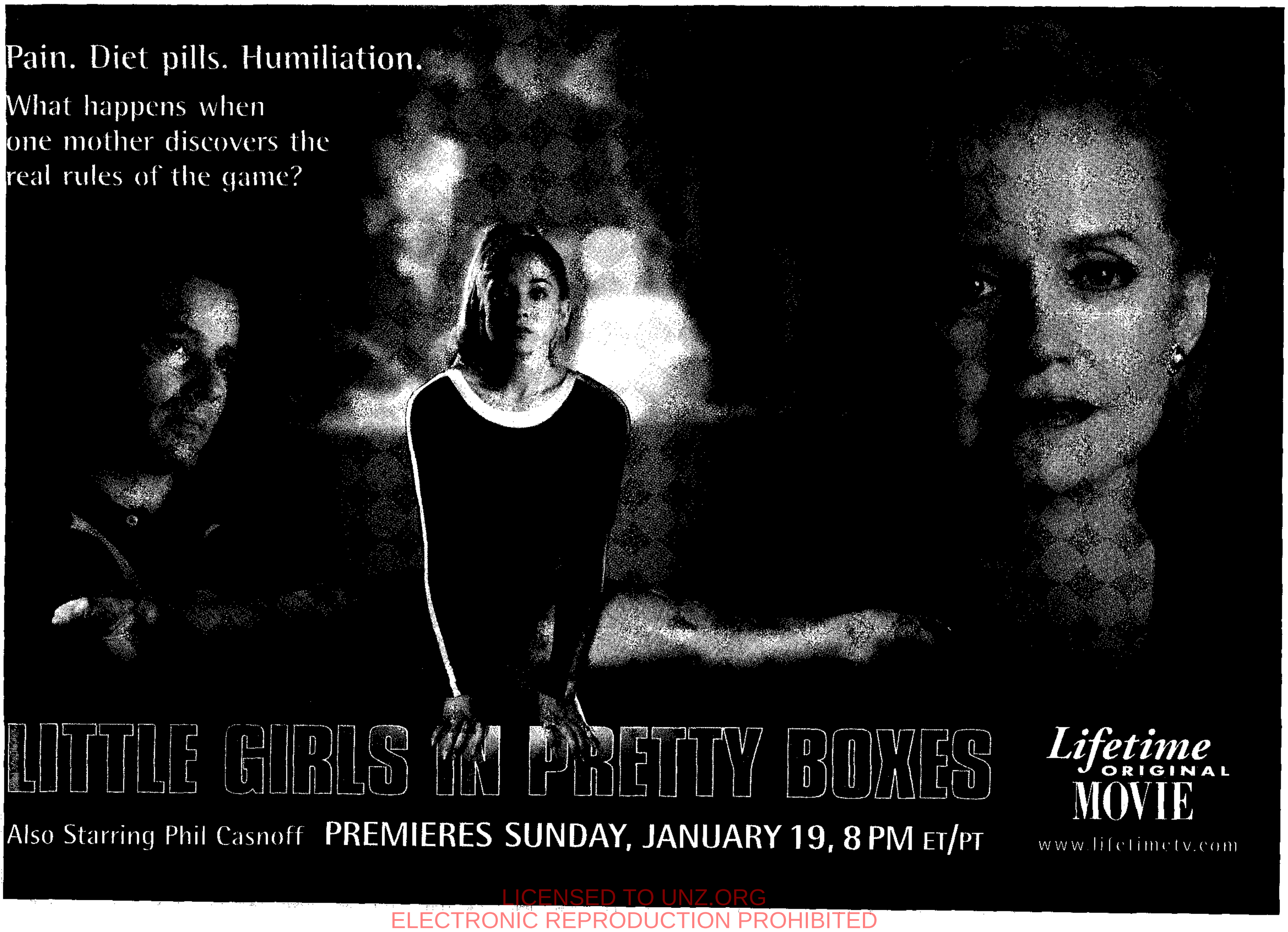
Honoring Martin Luther King, Jr.—Jan. 16 at 8: The Reverend Bernice A. King, Dr. King's younger daughter, discusses "Hard Questions, Heart Answers," a collection of her sermons and speeches. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.) . . . ¶ Jan. 20 at 10 A.M.: The choirs of the Convent Avenue, Thessalonia, Greater Zion Hill, Mount Nebo, and New Mount Zion Baptist churches commence the annual interfaith salute to Dr. King. The Reverend Joseph E. Lowery, the president and co-founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, is this year's keynote speaker. (Convent Avenue Baptist Church, 145th St. and Convent Ave. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Jan. 20 at 1: Thea K. Hunter, a graduate student in African-American history at Columbia University, leads a Big Onion Walking Tour through Harlem. For information, call 439-1090.

Frozen Hemlines—Three-time Canadian figure-skating champion Josée Chouinard joins skaters from the Ice Theatre of New York in "Montreal Fashions on Ice," which spotlights the winter collections of Dino Gaspari, Hilary Radley, Françoise Bouthillier, and other Québécois couturiers. (The Rink at Rockefeller Plaza, Fifth Ave. at 50th St. Jan. 20 at 6. For more information, call 397-0200.)

They Don't Do Windows—On Jan. 19, from 2 to 5, UrbanGlass will offer tours of its seventeen-thousand-square-foot public-access studio, in downtown Brooklyn, including the hot shop, where three twenty-four-hundred-degree furnaces can each handle between three and five hundred pounds of molten glass at a time; the mold-making shop; the neon shop; the bead-making area; and the cold shop, where glass taken from the annealer is ground down on giant lathes and cut with diamond saws. There will also be a glassblowing demonstration and, for those who register in advance, a chance to make paperweights. (57 Rockwell Pl., at Fulton St. For more information, call 718-625-3685.)

Readings—Jan. 15 at 6: Poets Thomas Disch, Rachel Hadas, J. D. McClatchy, and John Hollander gather for a reading to mark the start of a three-day conference titled "Technology and the Rest of Culture." (New School, 65 Fifth Ave. For more information, call 229-2488.) . . . ¶ Jan. 18 at 3: Poet Samuel Menashe reads from his works. (Jefferson Market Library, Sixth Ave. at 10th St. No tickets necessary.)

Talks—Jan. 21 at 8:30 A.M.: Wordsmiths William F. Buckley, Jr., Abe Rosenthal, Roy Blount, Jr., Stephen Sondheim, and Sapphire and linguist Jesse Sheidlower consider the use and abuse of language, in a breakfast discussion moderated by Random House publisher Harold Evans. (Fred's, at Barneys, 10 E. 61st St. Tickets at the door.) . . . ¶ Jan. 21 at 6:15: Bernard Aikema, a guest curator of the Morgan Library's exhibition "Tiepolo and His Circle," lectures on the early drawings of the eighteenth-century master. (29 E. 36th St. For information, call 685-0008, ext. 347.)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Therefore, HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors are contraindicated during pregnancy and in nursing mothers. **Pravastatin should be administered to women of childbearing age only when such patients are highly unlikely to conceive and have been informed of the potential hazards.** If the patient becomes pregnant while taking this class of drug, therapy should be discontinued and the patient apprised of the potential hazard to the fetus. **WARNINGS: Liver Enzymes —** HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors, like some other lipid-lowering therapies, have been associated with biochemical abnormalities of liver function. Increases of serum transaminase (ALT, AST) values to more than 3 times the upper limit of normal occurring on 2 or more (not necessarily sequential) occasions have been reported in 1.3% of patients treated with pravastatin in the US over an average period of 18 months. These abnormalities were not associated with cholestasis and did not appear to be related to treatment duration. In those patients in whom these abnormalities were believed to be related to pravastatin and who were discontinued from therapy, the transaminase levels usually fell slowly to pretreatment levels. These *biochemical findings are usually asymptomatic although worldwide experience indicates that anorexia, weakness, and/or abdominal pain may also be present in rare patients.* **It is recommended that liver function tests be performed before the initiation of treatment, at 6 and 12 weeks after initiation of therapy or elevation in dose, and periodically thereafter (e.g., semiannually).** Patients who develop increased transaminase levels should be monitored with a second liver function evaluation to confirm the finding and be followed thereafter with frequent liver function tests until the abnormality(ies) return to normal. *Should an increase in AST or ALT of three times the upper limit of normal or greater persist, withdrawal of pravastatin therapy is recommended. Active liver disease or unexplained transaminase elevations are* contraindications to the use of pravastatin (see **CONTRAINDICATIONS**). Caution should be exercised when pravastatin is administered to patients with a history of liver disease or heavy alcohol ingestion (see **CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY: Pharmacokinetics/Metabolism**). Such patients should be closely monitored, started at the lower end of the recommended dosing range, and titrated to the desired therapeutic effect. **Skeletal Muscle — Rare cases of rhabdomyolysis with acute renal failure secondary to myoglobinuria have been reported with pravastatin and other drugs in this class.** Uncomplicated myalgia has also been reported in pravastatin-treated patients (see **ADVERSE REACTIONS**). Myopathy, defined as muscle aching or muscle weakness in conjunction with increases in creatine phosphokinase (CPK) values to greater than 10 times the upper normal limit, was rare (< 0.1%) in pravastatin clinical trials. Myopathy should be considered in any patient with diffuse myalgias, muscle tenderness or weakness, and/or marked elevation of CPK. Patients should be advised to report promptly unexplained muscle pain, tenderness or weakness, particularly if accompanied by malaise or fever. **Pravastatin therapy should be discontinued if markedly elevated CPK levels occur or myopathy is diagnosed or suspected. Pravastatin therapy should also be temporarily withheld in any patient experiencing an acute or serious condition predisposing to the development of renal failure secondary to rhabdomyolysis, e.g., sepsis; hypotension; major surgery; trauma; severe metabolic, endocrine, or electrolyte disorders; or uncontrolled epilepsy.** The risk of myopathy during treatment with another HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor is increased with concurrent therapy with either erythromycin, cyclosporine, niacin, or fibrates. However, neither myopathy nor significant increases in CPK levels have been observed in three reports involving a total of 100 post-transplant patients (24 renal and 76 cardiac) treated for up to two years concurrently with pravastatin 10-40 mg and cyclosporine. Some of these patients also received other concomitant immunosuppressive therapies. In one single-dose study, pravastatin levels were found to be increased in cardiac transplant *patients receiving cyclosporine. Further, in clinical trials involving small numbers of patients who were treated* concurrently with pravastatin and niacin, there were no reports of myopathy. Also, myopathy was not reported in a trial of combination pravastatin (40 mg/day) and gemfibrozil (1200 mg/day), although 4 of 75 patients on the combination showed marked CPK elevations versus one of 73 patients receiving placebo. There was *a trend toward more frequent CPK elevations and patient withdrawals due to musculoskeletal symptoms in the group receiving combined treatment as compared with the groups receiving placebo, gemfibrozil, or* pravastatin monotherapy (see **PRECAUTIONS: Drug Interactions**). **The use of fibrates alone may occasionally be associated with myopathy. The combined use of pravastatin and fibrates should be avoided unless the benefit of further alterations in lipid levels is likely to outweigh the increased risk of this drug combination. PRECAUTIONS: General —** Pravastatin may elevate creatinine phosphokinase and transaminase levels (see **ADVERSE REACTIONS**). This should be considered in the differential diagnosis *of chest pain in a patient on therapy with pravastatin. Homozygous Familial Hypercholesterolemia.* Pravastatin has not been evaluated in patients with rare homozygous familial hypercholesterolemia. In this group of patients, it has been reported that HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors are less effective because the patients lack functional LDL receptors. *Renal Insufficiency.* A single 20 mg oral dose of pravastatin was administered to 24 patients with varying degrees of renal impairment (as determined by creatinine clearance). No effect was observed on the pharmacokinetics of pravastatin or its 3α-hydroxy isomeric metabolite (SQ 31,906). A small increase was seen in mean AUC values and half-life ($t^1/_2$) for the inactive enzymatic ring hydroxylation metabolite (SQ 31,945). Given this small sample size, the dosage administered, and the degree of individual variability, patients with renal impairment who are receiving pravastatin should be closely monitored. **Information for Patients —** Patients should be advised to report promptly unexplained muscle pain, tenderness or weakness, particularly if accompanied by malaise or fever. **Drug Interactions —** *Immunosuppressive Drugs, Gemfibrozil, Niacin (Nicotinic Acid), Erythromycin:* See **WARNINGS: Skeletal Muscle**. *Antipyrine:* Since concomitant administration of pravastatin had no effect on the clearance of antipyrine, interactions with other drugs metabolized via the same hepatic cytochrome isozymes are not expected. *Cholestyramine/Colestipol:* Concomitant administration resulted in an approximately 40 to 50% decrease in the mean AUC of pravastatin. However, when pravastatin was administered 1 hour before or 4 hours after cholestyramine or 1 hour before colestipol and a standard meal, there was no clinically significant decrease in bioavailability or therapeutic effect. (See **DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION: Concomitant Therapy**.) *Warfarin:* In a study involving 10 healthy male subjects given pravastatin and warfarin concomitantly for 6 days, bioavailability parameters at steady state for pravastatin (parent compound) were not altered. Pravastatin did not alter the plasma protein-binding of warfarin. Concomitant dosing did increase the AUC and Cmax of warfarin but did not produce any changes in its anticoagulant action (i.e., no increase was seen in mean prothrombin time after 6 days of concomitant therapy). However, bleeding and extreme prolongation of prothrombin time has been reported with another drug in this class. Patients receiving warfarin-type anticoagulants should have their prothrombin times closely monitored when pravastatin is initiated or the dosage of pravastatin is changed. *Cimetidine:* The $AUC_{0-12 hr}$ for pravastatin when given with cimetidine was not significantly different from the AUC for pravastatin when given alone. A significant difference was observed between the AUC's for pravastatin when given with *cimetidine compared to when administered with antacid. Digoxin:* In a crossover trial involving 18 healthy male subjects given pravastatin and digoxin concurrently for 9 days, the bioavailability parameters of digoxin were not affected. The AUC of pravastatin tended to increase, but the overall bioavailability of pravastatin plus its metabolites SQ 31,906 and SQ 31,945 was not altered. *Cyclosporine:* Some investigators have measured cyclosporine levels in patients on pravastatin, and to date, these results indicate no clinically meaningful elevations *in cyclosporine levels. In one single-dose study,* pravastatin levels were found to be increased in cardiac transplant patients receiving cyclosporine. *Gemfibrozil:* In a crossover study in 20 healthy male volunteers given concomitant single doses of pravastatin and gemfibrozil, there was a significant decrease in urinary excretion and protein binding of pravastatin. In addition, there was a significant increase in AUC, Cmax, and Tmax for the pravastatin metabolite SQ 31,906. Combination therapy with pravastatin and gemfibrozil is generally not recommended. In *interaction studies with aspirin, antacids* (1 hour prior to PRAVACHOL), *cimetidine, nicotinic acid*, or *probucol*, no statistically significant differences in bioavailability were seen when PRAVACHOL (pravastatin sodium) was administered. *Other Drugs:* During clinical trials, no *noticeable drug interactions were reported when* PRAVACHOL was added to: diuretics, antihypertensives, digitalis, ACE inhibitors, calcium channel blockers, beta-blockers, or nitroglycerin. **Endocrine Function —** HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors interfere with cholesterol synthesis and lower *circulating cholesterol levels* and, as such, might theoretically blunt adrenal or gonadal steroid hormone production. Results of clinical trials with pravastatin in males and post-menopausal females were inconsistent with regard to possible effects of the drug on basal steroid hormone levels. In a study of 21 males, the mean testosterone response to human chorionic gonadotropin was significantly reduced ($p < 0.004$) after 16 weeks of treatment with 40 *mg of pravastatin. However, the percentage of patients showing a* $\geq$ *50% rise in plasma testosterone after* human chorionic gonadotropin stimulation did not change significantly after therapy in these patients. The effects of HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors on spermatogenesis and fertility have not been studied in adequate numbers of patients. The effects, if any, of pravastatin on the pituitary-gonadal axis in pre-menopausal females are unknown. Patients treated with pravastatin who display clinical evidence of endocrine dysfunction should be evaluated appropriately. Caution should also be exercised if an HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor or other agent used to lower cholesterol levels is administered to patients also receiving other drugs (e.g., ketoconazole, spironolactone, *cimetidine) that may diminish the levels or activity of steroid hormones.* **CNS Toxicity —** CNS vascular lesions, characterized by perivascular hemorrhage and edema and *mononuclear* cell infiltration of perivascular spaces, were seen in dogs treated with pravastatin at a dose of 25 mg/kg/day, a dose that produced a plasma drug level about 50 times higher than the mean drug level in humans taking 40 mg/day. Similar CNS vascular lesions have been observed with several other drugs in this class. A chemically similar drug in this class produced optic nerve degeneration (Wallerian degeneration of retinogeniculate fibers) in clinically normal dogs in a dose-dependent fashion starting at 60 mg/kg/day, a *dose that produced mean plasma drug levels* about 30 times higher than the mean drug level in humans taking the highest recommended dose (as measured by total enzyme inhibitory activity). This same drug also produced vestibulocochlear Wallerian-like degeneration and retinal ganglion cell chromatolysis in dogs treated for 14 weeks at 180 mg/kg/day, a dose which resulted in a mean plasma drug level similar to that seen with the 60 *mg/kg/day* dose. **Carcinogenesis, Mutagenesis, Impairment of Fertility —** In a 2-year study in rats fed pravastatin at doses of 10, 30, or 100 mg/kg body weight, there was an increased incidence of hepatocellular carcinomas in males at the highest dose ($p < 0.01$). Although rats were given up to 125 times the human dose (HD) on a mg/kg body weight basis, serum drug levels were only 6 to 10 times higher than those measured in humans given 40 mg pravastatin as measured by AUC. The oral administration of 10, 30, or 100 mg/kg (producing plasma drug levels approximately 0.5 to 5.0 times the human drug levels at 40 mg) of pravastatin to mice for 22 months resulted in a statistically significant increase in the incidence of malignant lymphomas in treated females when all treatment groups were pooled and compared to controls ($p < 0.05$). The incidence was not dose-related and male mice were not affected. A chemically similar drug in this class was administered to *mice for 72 weeks at 25, 100, and 400 mg/kg body weight, which resulted* in mean serum drug levels approximately 3, 15, and 33 times higher than the mean human serum drug concentration (as total inhibitory activity) after a 40 mg oral dose. Liver carcinomas were significantly increased in high-dose females and mid- and high-dose males, with a maximum incidence of 90 percent in males. The incidence of adenomas of the liver was significantly increased in mid- and high-dose females. Drug treatment also significantly increased the incidence of lung adenomas in mid- and high-dose males and females. Adenomas of the eye Harderian gland (a gland of the eye of rodents) were significantly higher in *high-dose mice than in controls. No evidence of mutagenicity was observed in vitro, with or without rat-liver* metabolic activation, in the following studies: microbial mutagen tests, using mutant strains of *Salmonella typhimurium* or *Escherichia coli*; a forward mutation assay in L5178Y TK +/- mouse lymphoma cells; a chromosomal aberration test in hamster cells; and a gene conversion assay using *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*. In addition, there was no evidence of mutagenicity in either a dominant lethal test in mice or a micronucleus test in mice. In a study in rats, with daily doses up to 500 mg/kg, pravastatin did not produce any adverse effects on fertility or general reproductive performance. However, in a study with another HMG-CoA reductase *inhibitor, there was decreased fertility in male* rats treated for 34 weeks at 25 mg/kg body weight, although this effect was not observed in a subsequent fertility study when this same dose was administered for 11 weeks (the entire cycle of spermatogenesis, including epididymal maturation). In rats treated with this same reductase inhibitor at 180 mg/kg/day, seminiferous tubule degeneration (necrosis and loss of spermatogenic epithelium) was observed. Although not seen with pravastatin, two similar drugs in this class caused drug-related testicular atrophy, decreased spermatogenesis, spermatocytic degeneration, and giant cell formation *in dogs. The clinical significance of these findings is unclear.* **Pregnancy: Pregnancy Category X. —** See **CONTRAINDICATIONS.** Safety in pregnant women has not been established. Pravastatin was not teratogenic in rats at doses up to 1000 mg/kg daily or in rabbits at doses of up to 50 mg/kg daily. These doses resulted in 20x (rabbit) or 240x (rat) the human exposure based on surface area ($mg/meter^2$). However, in studies with another HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor, skeletal malformations were observed in rats and mice. There has been one report of severe congenital bony deformity, tracheo-esophageal fistula, and anal atresia (Vater association) in a baby born to a woman who took another HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor with dextroamphetamine sulfate during the first trimester of pregnancy. PRAVACHOL (pravastatin sodium) should be administered to women of child-bearing potential only when such patients are highly unlikely to conceive and have been informed of the potential hazards. If the woman becomes pregnant while taking PRAVACHOL (pravastatin sodium), it should be discontinued and the patient advised again as to the potential hazards to the fetus. **Nursing Mothers —** A small amount of pravastatin is excreted in human breast milk. Because of the potential for serious adverse reactions in nursing infants, women taking PRAVACHOL should not nurse (see **CONTRAINDICATIONS**). **Pediatric Use —** Safety and effectiveness in individuals less than 18 years old have not been established. Hence, treatment in patients less than 18 years old is not recommended at this time. **ADVERSE REACTIONS:** Pravastatin is generally well tolerated; adverse reactions have usually been mild and transient. In 4-month long placebo-controlled trials, 1.7% of pravastatin-treated patients and 1.2% of placebo-treated patients were discontinued from treatment because of adverse experiences attributed to study drug therapy; this difference was not statistically significant. In long-term studies, the most common reasons for discontinuation were asymptomatic serum transaminase increases and mild, non-specific gastrointestinal complaints. During clinical trials the overall incidence of adverse events in the elderly was *not different from the incidence observed in younger patients.* **Adverse Clinical Events —** *All adverse* clinical events (regardless of attribution) reported in more than 2% of pravastatin-treated patients in the placebo-controlled trials are identified in the table below; also shown are the percentages of patients in whom these medical events were believed to be related or possibly related to the drug:

	All Events		**Events Attributed to Study Drug**	
Body System/Event	**Pravastatin (N = 900) %**	**Placebo (N = 411) %**	**Pravastatin (N = 900) %**	**Placebo (N = 411) %**
Cardiovascular				
Cardiac Chest Pain	4.0	3.4	0.1	0.0
Dermatologic Rash	4.0*	1.1	1.3	0.9
Gastrointestinal				
Nausea/Vomiting	7.3	7.1	2.9	3.4
Diarrhea	6.2	5.6	2.0	1.9
Abdominal Pain	5.4	6.9	2.0	3.9
Constipation	4.0	7.1	2.4	5.1
Flatulence	3.3	3.6	2.7	3.4
Heartburn	2.9	1.9	2.0	0.7
General				
Fatigue	3.8	3.4	1.9	1.0
Chest Pain	3.7	1.9	0.3	0.2
Influenza	2.4*	0.7	0.0	0.0
Musculoskeletal				
Localized Pain	10.0	9.0	1.4	1.5
Myalgia	2.7	1.0	0.6	0.0
Nervous System				
Headache	6.2	3.9	1.7*	0.2
Dizziness	3.3	3.2	1.0	0.5
Renal/Genitourinary				
Urinary Abnormality	2.4	2.9	0.7	1.2
Respiratory				
Common Cold	7.0	6.3	0.0	0.0
Rhinitis	4.0	4.1	0.1	0.0
Cough	2.6	1.7	0.1	0.0

*Statistically significantly different from placebo.

In the Pravastatin Primary Prevention Study (West of Scotland Coronary Prevention Study) (see **CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY: Clinical Studies**) involving 6595 patients treated with PRAVACHOL (pravastatin sodium) ($N = 3302$) or placebo ($n = 3293$) the adverse event profile in the pravastatin group was comparable to that of the placebo group over the median 4.8 years of the study. The following effects have been reported with drugs in this class; not all the effects listed below have necessarily been associated with pravastatin therapy: *Skeletal:* myopathy, rhabdomyolysis, arthralgia. *Neurological:* dysfunction of certain cranial nerves (including alteration of taste, impairment of extra-ocular movement, facial paresis), tremor, vertigo, memory loss, paresthesia, peripheral neuropathy, peripheral nerve palsy, anxiety, insomnia, depression. *Hypersensitivity Reactions: An apparent hypersensitivity syndrome* has been reported rarely which has included one or more *of the following features:* anaphylaxis, angioedema, lupus erythematous-like syndrome, polymyalgia rheumatica, dermatomyositis, vasculitis, purpura, thrombocytopenia, leukopenia, hemolytic anemia, positive ANA, ESR increase, eosinophilia, arthritis, arthralgia, urticaria, asthenia, photosensitivity, fever, chills, flushing, malaise, dyspnea, toxic epidermal necrolysis, erythema multiforme, including Stevens-Johnson syndrome. *Gastrointestinal:* pancreatitis, hepatitis, including chronic active hepatitis, cholestatic jaundice, fatty change in liver, and, rarely, cirrhosis, fulminant hepatic necrosis, and hepatoma; anorexia, vomiting. *Skin:* alopecia, pruritus. A variety of skin changes (e.g., nodules, discoloration, dryness of skin/mucous membranes, changes *to hair/nails) have been reported. Reproductive:* gynecomastia, loss of libido, erectile dysfunction. *Eye:* progression of cataracts (lens opacities), ophthalmoplegia. *Laboratory Abnormalities:* elevated transaminases, alkaline phosphatase, and bilirubin; thyroid function abnormalities. **Laboratory Test Abnormalities —** Increases in serum transaminase (ALT, AST) values and CPK have been observed (see **WARNINGS**). Transient, asymptomatic eosinophilia has been reported. Eosinophil counts usually returned to normal despite continued therapy. Anemia, thrombocytopenia, and leukopenia have been reported with HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors. **Concomitant Therapy —** Pravastatin has been administered concurrently with cholestyramine, colestipol, nicotinic acid, probucol and gemfibrozil. *Preliminary data suggest that the addition* of either probucol or gemfibrozil to therapy with lovastatin or pravastatin is **not** associated with greater reduction in LDL-cholesterol than that achieved with lovastatin or pravastatin alone. No adverse reactions unique to the combination or in addition to those previously reported for each drug alone have been reported. Myopathy and rhabdomyolysis (with or without acute renal failure) have been reported when another HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor was used in combination with immunosuppressive drugs, gemfibrozil, erythromycin, or lipid-lowering doses of nicotinic acid. Concomitant therapy with HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors and these agents is generally not recommended. (See **WARNINGS: Skeletal Muscle** and **PRECAUTIONS: Drug Interactions**.) **OVERDOSAGE:** To date, there are two reported cases of overdosage with pravastatin, both of which were asymptomatic and not associated with clinical laboratory abnormalities. If an overdose occurs, it should be treated symptomatically and supportive measures should be instituted as required.

CAUTION: Federal (USA) law prohibits dispensing without prescription.

Consult package insert before prescribing PRAVACHOL® (pravastatin sodium).

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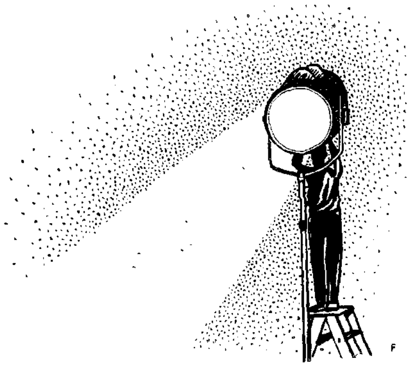
THE MOVIES



FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

Albino Alligator—In Kevin Spacey's directorial début, a trio of fleeing bank robbers (Matt Dillon, Gary Sinise, and William Fichtner) invades a bar and makes hostages of the patrons (among them Faye Dunaway and M. Emmet Walsh). Opening Jan. 17. (Angelika Film Center.)

Beverly Hills Ninja—Chris Farley is an orphan discovered by a Japanese martial-arts master and raised as his successor, in a comedy directed by Dennis Dugan. Opening Jan. 17. (Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and 64th and 2nd.)

Metro—Eddie Murphy stars as an arbitrator for the San Francisco Police Department, in a thriller directed by Thomas Carter. Opening Jan. 17. (Embassy 1.)

CURRENT FILMS

(The signed notes are by Bruce Diones, Sarah Kerr, Anthony Lane, and Terrence Rafferty. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given. Theatre information is listed on page 38.)

Beavis and Butt-head Do America—Here's an unexpected and hilarious turn of events: this animated film, based on the popular MTV show, may be the hippest comedy of the season. The crude and lifeless style in which Mike Judge's two disaffected adolescents are drawn wears a little thin over the course of a full-length movie, but the trendy catchphrases, the scatological jokes, and the misogynistic lewdness—a result of endless hours of music-video viewing—make for hormonal, anarchic fun. The plot has the boys on the road in search of thieves who have stolen their treasured television. Their monumentally stupid and childish observations burst like water balloons over the heads of everyone they encounter; the movie plays like a dumbed-down "Animal House," and its idiocy is irresistible.—B.D. (Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Manhattan Twin, Orpheum VII, and State.)

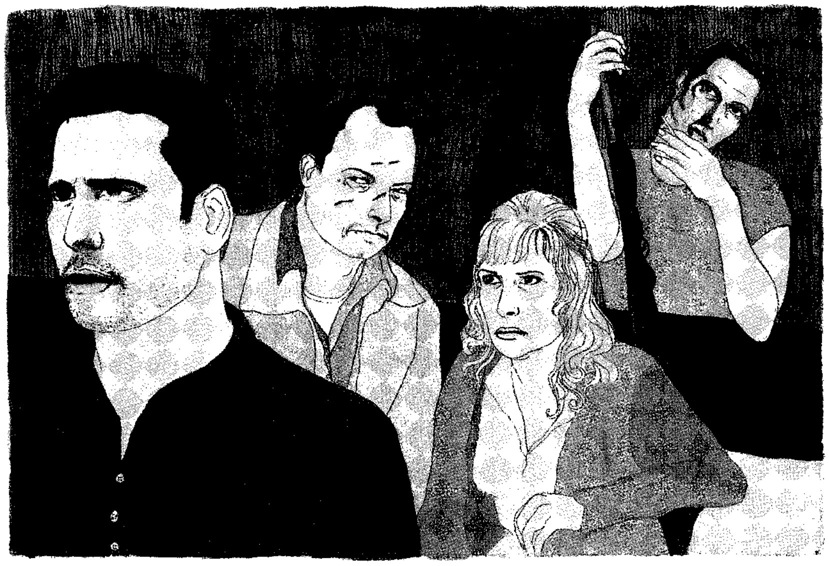
Breaking the Waves—The Danish director Lars von Trier tells the sad story of a devout young Scottish woman (Emily Watson) who becomes a whore in order to save the life of her critically ill husband (Stellan Skarsgård). Von Trier gives the highbrow audience precisely what it wanted in the art-house boom years of the fifties and early sixties—nudity plus theology. The erotic-metaphysical hokum would be somewhat easier to take if the picture displayed anything resembling a genuine religious impulse.—T.R. (11/18/96) (Angelika Film Center and Eastside Playhouse.)

La Cérémonie—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

The English Patient—Written and directed by Anthony Minghella, from the novel by Michael Ondaatje, this long and searching movie tangles together a number of stories and characters: Almásy (Ralph Fiennes) and Katharine (Kristin Scott Thomas), who have an affair in North Africa before the Second World War; a French-Canadian nurse (Juliette Binoche) who cares for the badly burned Almásy after the war, and the Sikh soldier (Naveen Andrews) *she* has an affair with; and the mysterious Caravaggio (Willem Dafoe), a scavenging thief who appears to know the secrets of Almásy's past. The triumph of the film lies not just in the force and range of the performances but in Minghella's creation of an intimate epic: vast landscapes mingle with the minute details of desire, and the combination is transfixing.—A.L. (11/25/96) (Chelsea Cinemas, Embassy 3, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, New York Twin, and Village East Cinemas.)

Everyone Says I Love You—A musical written and directed by Woody Allen, set in Paris, Venice, and New York. Allen is also one of the stars, along with Alan Alda, Drew Barrymore, Lucas Haas, Goldie Hawn, Julia Roberts, and Tim Roth. (New York Twin.)

Evita—At last, after years of rumor and negotiation—years that have made it almost as mythical as Eva Perón herself—the rock opera by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice comes to the screen. The problem is that it remains a rock opera by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice. There are moments when music and lyrics bear only the faintest relation to each other, a tricky state of affairs in a work that is almost bereft of spoken dialogue. This deficit is good news for Madonna, of course—she is barely required to speak or even to act, though she does suggest, rather convincingly, that Evita's outstanding talent was a capacity for growing into an early-model Madonna. The only voices of skepticism belong to Jonathan Pryce, as a sly and troubled Juan Perón, and Antonio Banderas, who prowls through the action as our friendly smoldering narrator. This is a thin tale—poor country girl makes good, and eventually makes the grade as a semi-saint—to which the director, Alan Parker, lends energy with frenzied cutting and vast crowds. The picture blares and blazes at you without letup, and it works best when it's openly theatrical—only when it's over do you sense how little lay beneath the busy surface. It's a movie with hidden shallows.—A.L. (1/6/97) (Chelsea West, Cinema I, 86th Street East Twin, Guild, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, and Village Theatre VII.)



Opening January 17, Matt Dillon, Gary Sinise, Faye Dunaway, and William Fichtner in Kevin Spacey's "Albino Alligator."

LARA TOMLIN

Ghosts of Mississippi—Rob Reiner's well-intentioned film about the efforts of a Southern attorney (Alec Baldwin) to bring the killer of the civil-rights leader Medgar Evers to justice. Reiner's work here is less platitudinous than in his last movie, "The American President," and the histrionics of "A Few Good Men" have been kept to a minimum, but the film is bland and punchless. Baldwin does his usual topnotch work, and James Woods is good (in bad makeup) as the killer, Byron De La Beckwith (his snakelike delivery hits all the right notes), but Whoopi Goldberg, as Evers's widow, seems too contemporary. The film is seriously underwritten; the audience never gets a sense of what Evers was like, and, since it took decades to convict De La Beckwith, there's little tension in the story.—B.D. (19th Street East 6, Village Theatre VII, and Ziegfeld.)

Hamlet—It's Shakespeare's most richly ambiguous tragedy, but there's nothing sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought about *this* production. Kenneth Branagh's film uses the full text of the play (the running time is nearly four hours), and it's shot in 70 mm., on gigantic, ornate sets and the imposing grounds of Blenheim Palace. The approach is daringly straightforward: in each scene, Branagh's aim is to make literal, material sense of the play's complex action and of the characters' often confused motivations. The director himself plays the unhappy Prince, and so lucidly that every shift in the volatile character's mood seems perfectly natural: the beauty of the performance lies in its awareness of how *reasonable* Hamlet's scruples are. Derek Jacobi, as Claudius, and Julie Christie, as Gertrude, are also superb. Laurence Olivier called his own 1948 film "a study in 'Hamlet' "; Branagh's version is no study, but the huge, unwieldy thing itself, staged with exhilarating clarity and force. Also with Richard Briers (Polonius), Kate Winslet (Ophelia), Nicholas Farrell (Horatio), Michael Maloney (Laertes), Brian Blessed (the Ghost), and, in small roles, Jack Lemmon, Gérard Dépardieu, Charlton Heston, Billy Crystal, and Robin Williams.—T.R. (1/13/97) (Paris.)

Inside—Arthur Penn examines apartheid from the point of view of an imprisoned white South African professor (Eric Stoltz). Also with Nigel Hawthorne and Louis Gossett, Jr. (Quad Cinema.)

Jerry Maguire—Tom Cruise plays the title character, who is a glib, cocky agent for professional athletes. In the fluid opening scenes, the movie, which was written and directed by Cameron Crowe, promises to be something unusual—a comedy about the spiritual crisis of a shallow man. But the star quickly reverts to his familiar feisty, can-do shtick, and Crowe loses control of the fragile comic tone. Also with Renee Zellweger, Cuba Gooding, Jr., and Bonnie Hunt.—T.R. (12/16/96) (Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Village East Cinemas.)

Marvin's Room—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Lincoln Square, 68th St. Playhouse, and Village East Cinemas.)

Michael—Holiday candy from Nora Ephron, about a cynical tabloid reporter (William Hurt) who goes to Iowa to cover a story about an angel (John Travolta); it pointlessly reheats half a dozen old screwball and sentimental plots. The one new joke is that this angel is no halo-wearing, harp-strumming innocent: he specializes in fighting and sex. Travolta throws himself into it, but the script is so vulgar and sophomoric that it makes him look like an over-eager first-time actor. Andie MacDowell is the love interest.—S.K. (Beekman, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

Mother—Albert Brooks directed, co-wrote (with Monica Johnson), and stars in this comedy, which has a dynamite premise: he plays a writer who's had problems with women and moves back in with his befuddled mother (Debbie Reynolds) in order to discover where he went wrong. Reynolds dispenses with her Vegas sassiness (deliciously ribbed on recent episodes of "Saturday Night Live") for a quiet, sensible turn here, but Brooks's writing does her a disservice. Her character pinches pennies without being miserly, she embarrasses her son without malice, and she's so mired in her habits that she never really gets to teach him anything about herself or women in general. The film flounders around trying to make tired points; Brooks gets his fair share of funny asides, but he goes beyond his usual subversive whininess into mean-spirited crankiness—and a lack of generosity is fatal for a comedy that's meant to charm. A dismissable subplot involves Rob Morrow as the younger brother Mom always liked better.—B.D. (Chelsea Cinemas, East 85th Street, Lincoln Square, 72nd Street East, and Village Theatre VII.)

The People vs. Larry Flynt—Milos Forman's film chronicles the sexual adventures, medical travails, and legal battles of Larry Flynt (Woody Harrelson)—the creator of the unprecedentedly crude skin magazine *Hustler*—and his raunchy wife, Althea (Courtney Love). For an hour or so, it's a cheerful and unpretentious picaresque comedy (slightly marred by a trace of "only in America" condescension), but it turns sentimental and smugly high-minded in its second half: having gone to great lengths to humanize its disreputable hero and heroine, the movie then makes the mistake of trying to canonize them. Also with Edward Norton, Brett Harrelson, James Cromwell, Crispin Glover, and Donna Hanover. Screenplay by Scott Alexander and Larry Karaszewski.—T.R. (1/13/97) (Chelsea West, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, 64th and 2nd, and Village Theatre VII.)

The Portrait of a Lady—Henry James's most celebrated novel (and, in its range of emotional shading, one of his broadest) has become, under the guidance of director Jane Campion and screenwriter Laura Jones, an intense and lengthy monotone. Isabel Archer (Nicole Kidman) arrives in a sombre, repressive England, then travels to an Italy that's not much better; there she marries Gilbert Osmond (John Malkovich), even though anyone in the audience could tell her to steer clear. The film is far more obvious than the book: the longings and hatreds are spelled out for us, writ large in the unyielding gloom of the set designs. Campion seems not to believe in James's excitable moral adventuresss; she substitutes a whey-faced victim to whom tragic things are destined to happen, leaving Kidman with no room to breathe. With Martin Donovan as Ralph Touchett, John Gielgud as Ralph's father, and Barbara Hershey, in what is easily the most potent performance in the picture, as the mysterious Madame Merle.—A.L. (1/6/97) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.)

Scream—Wes Craven, who knows a good slasher from a bad one (he directed "Last House on the Left" and "A Nightmare on Elm Street"), pokes not so subtle fun at his own genre in this entertaining horror comedy. He and his scriptwriter, Kevin Williamson, take the clichés of fright films and reinvigorate them with a cheeky knowingness—the victims are horror-movie aficionados who in many instances make the same mistakes they've joked about seeing made on screen. With help from an unusually strong cast—Drew Barrymore, Neve Campbell, Courteney Cox, and David Arquette all do smashing work—Craven wrings some real thrills from the familiar perils of all those teen-age gorefests.—B.D. (Astor Plaza, Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and Waverly.)

Secrets & Lies—Hortense (Marianne Jean-Baptiste), the heroine of Mike Leigh's broadest and most ambitious film to date, decides after the death of her adoptive mother to seek her biological one. The quest turns up Cynthia (Brenda Blethyn), who freaks out: Hortense is middle-class and black, Cynthia working-class and white. Jean-Baptiste gives a quiet, pacific performance; Blethyn deals in spasms of exaggeration which belong in another film altogether. Still, there is a fine supporting cast, and they all gather in the final scene, a cathartic barbecue that starts off as nicely choreographed light comedy and darkens to a Bergman-like chorus of wailing women and slightly overcooked dialogue.—A.L. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Village East Cinemas.)

Shine—The hero of Scott Hicks's absorbing biographical film is the Australian concert pianist David Helfgott (played, at different stages of his life, by Alex Rafalowicz, Noah Taylor, and Geoffrey Rush), who suffered a severe breakdown, spent years in mental institutions, and then, improbably, resumed his career. Although the movie's swiftness and lightness are pleasing, the over-all image they create is indistinct: it just evaporates in your head when the lights come up. Also with Armin Mueller-Stahl, Lynn Redgrave, and John Gielgud (who's in especially buoyant comic form).—T.R. (12/2/96) (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema II, Cinema 3rd Avenue, and Lincoln Square.)

Some Mother's Son—A picture that traces the friendship of two Irish women (Helen Mirren and Fionnula Flanagan) whose sons have joined the 1981 I.R.A. hunger strike at Maze Prison. Directed by Terry George, who co-wrote the screenplay with Jim Sheridan. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Square.)

Thieves (Les Voleurs)—A thriller from André Téchiné, about a French policeman (Daniel Auteuil), his brother (Didier Bezace), the brother's mistress (Laurence Côte), and the mistress's lover (Catherine Deneuve). In French. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

The Whole Wide World—The relationship of Novalyne Price Ellis (Renee Zellweger) and the writer Robert E. Howard (Vincent D'Onofrio) in the nineteen-thirties is the basis for a film directed by Dan Ireland. (Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

ALSO PLAYING

BIG NIGHT (reviewed in our issue of 9/23/96): Cinema 3 and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.... **BOUND:** Worldwide Cinemas.... **CITIZEN RUTH:** Angelika Film Center.... **THE CRUCIBLE** (12/2/96): Angelika Film Center, Baronet, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.... **DAYLIGHT:** Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and National Twin.... **THE EVENING STAR:** First & 62nd Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII.... **THE FIRST WIVES CLUB:** Worldwide Cinemas.... **THE GARDEN OF THE FINZI-CONTINIS:** Quad Cinema.... **HIGH SCHOOL HIGH** (11/11/96): Worldwide Cinemas.... **101 DALMATIANS** (12/9/96): 84th Street Sixplex, 86th Street East Twin, Metro Cinema, Sutton, and Village East Cinemas.... **I'M NOT RAPPAPORT:** First & 62nd Cinemas and Regency.... **JACKIE CHAN'S FIRST STRIKE:** 84th Street Sixplex, Gotham Cinema, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, State, and Village East Cinemas.... **THE JEW:** Film Forum.... **THE LONG KISS GOODNIGHT:** Worldwide Cinemas.... **MARS ATTACKS!** (12/16/96): Chelsea Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Olympia, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.... **MESSAGE TO LOVE: THE ISLE OF WIGHT FESTIVAL:** Film Forum 3.... **MICROCOSMOS:** Sutton.... **ONE FINE DAY:** Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet, Lincoln Square, National Twin, Orpheum VII, 34th St. East, and Village East Cinemas.... **THE PREACHER'S WIFE:** 84th Street Sixplex, Embassy 2, Orpheum VII, and 34th Street Showplace.... **RANSOM** (11/11/96): 86th Street East Twin, Embassy 4, and Village East Cinemas.... **THE RELIC:** Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Manhattan Twin, Metro Cinema, Orpheum VII, State, 34th Street Showplace, and Waverly.... **RIDICULE:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.... **SCREWED:** Cinema Village.... **SLEEPERS** (11/4/96): Worldwide Cinemas.... **SLING BLADE:** Angelika Film Center.... **SWINGERS:** Carnegie Hall Cinemas, The Screening Room, and Sutton.... **TURBULENCE:** Art Greenwich Twin, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Olympia, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and 34th Street Showplace.... **WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S ROMEO & JULIET:** 59th Street East Cinema and Worldwide Cinemas.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th St.
Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
Baronet, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Carnegie Hall Cinemas, Seventh Ave. between 56th and 57th Sts.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St.
Coronet, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
86th Street East Twin, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Embassy 1, Broadway at 46th St.
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (757-2280).
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Manhattan Twin, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
National Twin, Broadway at 44th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St.
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
Regency, Broadway at 67th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
68th St. Playhouse, Third Ave. at 68th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th St. East, 241 E. 34th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Waverly 1 and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the listings following these notes.)

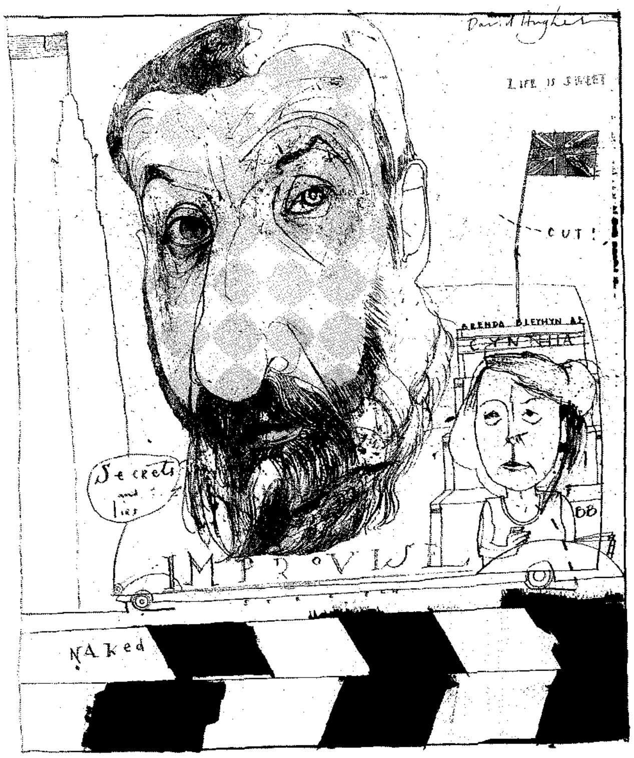
Bull Durham (1988)—Written and directed by Ron Shelton, this sunny romantic comedy takes us into a subculture that's like a bawdy adjunct of childhood—minor-league baseball. Kevin Costner plays the smart, hyperarticulate catcher Crash, who, after playing for twelve years, arrives in Durham, North Carolina, to join the Durham Bulls and learns that he's been brought in to train baby-faced Nuke (Tim Robbins), a wild young rookie pitcher who is destined to move up. Susan Sarandon plays the beautiful, passionate Annie Savoy, a baseball fanatic who has her own scorecard: "There's never been a ballplayer slept with me who didn't have the best year of his career." What you keep reacting to is the film's exuberant doodles.—P.K. (American Museum of the Moving Image; Jan. 19.)

City Streets (1931)—A love story in a gangster setting which got carried away into so much fancy Expressionism and symbolism that it seems stylized out of all relationship to the actual world. The director, Rouben Mamoulian, appears to be the culprit; he's so busy with his camera arabesques he forgets to tell the story. Gary Cooper is the honest, gaunt young hero from the world of the circus who gets into the beer racket and starts wearing coats with fur collars; Sylvia Sidney is the sacrificing heroine who goes to jail for her father (Guy Kibbee). The script is based on a story by Dashiell Hammett.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Jan. 20-21.)

Home Sweet Home (1982)—The BBC film that inspired Clive James to write, "If you can imagine 'Così Fan Tutte' with the music taken out, and then with the words taken out, and then with all the décor and costumes replaced by the tackiest fabrics and furniture known to mortal man, you've got a movie by Mike Leigh." Eric Richard plays a postman carrying on with two coworkers' dissatisfied wives; Timothy Spall and Kay Stonham are one of the unhappy couples, Tim Barker and Su Elliott the other. Elliott seizes center screen with a vengeance as a romance-novel reader who dresses up her life with paperback rhetoric. And Barker is unexpectedly touching as a befuddled man who speaks in corny riddles and moldy pop lyrics. The characters are caught in a communal mind-fog—a total communications breakdown—but Leigh's revelatory comedy pierces through.—M.S. (Anthology Film Archives; Jan. 18.)

Lovers and Thieves (1957)—In the year he died, Sacha Guitry, who was seventy-two, made a couple of films. This sly detective comedy, which he wrote and then directed from a wheelchair, is one of them. It includes an extended romantic sequence that is one of the most impudent ever filmed: Magali Noel, the enchanting, stylish murder victim, loathes her husband so much that she and her lover make love all over Paris, so that everyone will know the husband is a cuckold. The lover, who is also the narrator (Jean Poiret), inadvertently commits a murder for which an innocent thief (Michel Serrault) is sent to prison. Conscience-stricken, the lover takes over the occupation of the thief. But all this is only the loose framework; Guitry makes a sortie into a great loony bin, provides an audacious painting theft, and stops everything while a mad beatnik (Darry Cowl) addresses a courtroom. It's a fresh, lovely movie. In French.—P.K. (Anthology Film Archives; Jan. 15.)

Wings of Desire (1987)—Two angels—Damiel (Bruno Ganz) and Cassiel (Otto Sander)—hover over the bleak, divided city and move among the forlorn Berliners, listening to what's in their minds: listening to the questions about existence that these people ask themselves. The dim whimsy, the recitations of prose poetry which recall the Beats—it all produces a blissed-out stupor that feels vaguely avant-garde. With Peter Falk, who brings some funky warmth to the role of an American movie star, and Curt Bois as a sad-faced old man called Homer. The director, Wim Wenders, wrote the script with the collaboration of Peter Handke. In English, French, and German.—P.K. (Anthology Film Archives; Jan. 15.)



At the Anthology Film Archives, films by Mike Leigh.

DAVID HUGHES

LATE RUNS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—A series of film noir based on novels by Raymond Chandler, Dashiell Hammett, Cornell Woolrich (a.k.a. William Irish), and James M. Cain. Through Jan. 19: "The Big Sleep" (1945, Howard Hawks), with Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall. . . . Jan. 20-21: "The Maltese Falcon" (1931, Roy Del Ruth), with Ricardo Cortez and Bebe Daniels, and "City Streets" (†).

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Jan. 16 at 2:30: "Too Much Happiness" (1994, Cédric Kahn; in French). . . . Jan. 16 at 3 and 6: "Carnival in Venice" (1995, Vittorio de Seta), a documentary. . . . Jan. 16 at 6: "Peace and Love" (1994, Laurence Ferreira Barbosa; in French, with no English subtitles). . . . Jan. 17 at 2:30: "Travolta and Me" (1994, Patricia Mazuy; in French). . . . Jan. 17 at 3: "Divide and Conquer" (1943, Frank Capra and Anatole Litvak) and "The Battle of Britain" (1943, Anthony Weiller). . . . Jan. 17 at 6: "Portrait of a Young Woman at the End of the Sixties, in Brussels" (1994, Chantal Akerman; in French). . . . Jan. 17 at 6: "The Battle of Russia" (1943, Litvak). . . . Jan. 17 at 8: "Cold Water" (1994, Olivier Assayas; in French). . . . Jan. 17 at 8 and Jan. 18 at 2:30: "Yang & Yin: Gender in Chinese Cinema" (1996, Stanley Kwan), a documentary. . . . Jan. 18 at 2: "Wild Reeds" (1994, André Téchiné; in French). . . . Jan. 18 at 5: "Brothers" (1994, Olivier Dahan; in French). . . . Jan. 18 at 5: "The Battle of China" (1944, Capra and Litvak). . . . Jan. 19 at 2 and Jan. 20 at 5: "Nenette and Boni" (1996, Claire Denis). . . . Jan. 19 at 2:30 and Jan. 21 at 6: "Death Mills" (1948) and "Nuremberg" (1948), both documentaries. . . . Jan. 19 at 5: "U.S. Go Home" (1994, Denis; in French). . . . Jan. 19 at 5 and Jan. 21 at 3: "The Autobiography of a 'Jeep'" (1943, Irving Lerner), "The Town" (1944, Josef von Sternberg), and "The Land" (1942, Robert and Frances Flaherty). . . . Jan. 20 at 2:30: "So Young, So Bad" (1950, Bernard Borhaus), with Paul Henreid, Anne Jackson, and Anne Francis. . . . Jan. 20 at 2:30: "War Comes to America" (1945, Litvak) and "The Negro Soldier" (1944, Stuart Heisler and Capra). . . . Jan. 20 at 5: "Prelude to War" (1942, Capra) and "The Nazis Strike" (1942, Capra and Litvak). . . . Jan. 21 at 2:30: "The Spiral Staircase" (1946, Robert Siodmak), with Dorothy McGuire, George Brent, and Ethel Barrymore. . . . Jan. 21 at 6: "El Dorado" (1921, Marcel l'Herbier; with French intertitles).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600)—Through Jan. 22: The Sixth Annual New York Jewish Film/Video Festival. . . . ¶ Jan. 17 at 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10 and Jan. 18 at 4: "Spread the Word" (1995, Fred Parnes). . . . ¶ Jan. 18 at 2: "The Time Machine" (1960, George Pal), with Rod Taylor and Yvette Mimieux.

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Jan. 21 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "Les Visiteurs" (1993, Jean-Marie Poiré; in French), with Jean Reno and Christian Clavier.

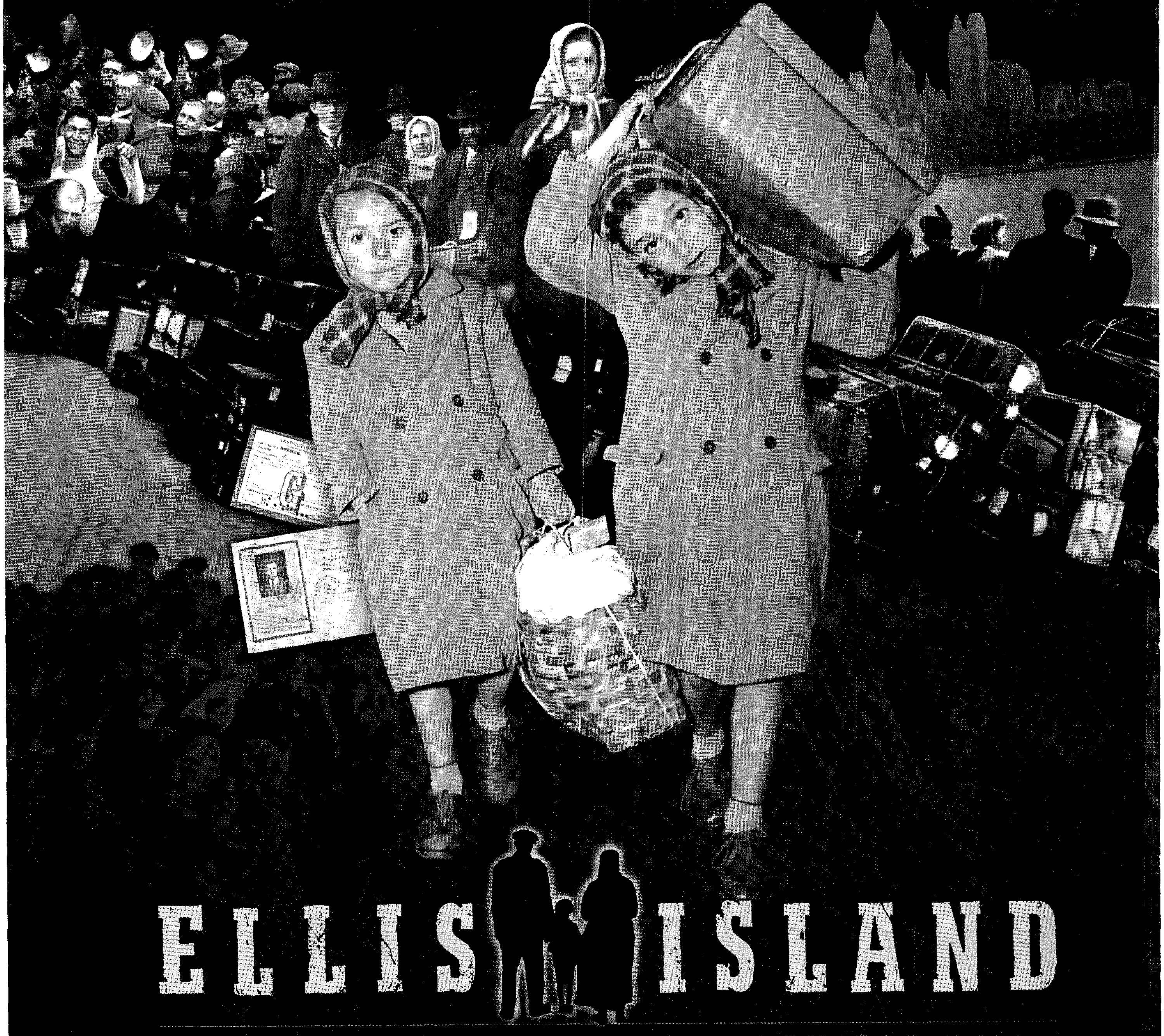
American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—A program of films by Ron Shelton, who will discuss his films after both 2 P.M. showings. Jan. 18 at 2: "Tin Cup" (1996). . . . Jan. 19 at 2: "Bull Durham" (†). . . . Jan. 19 at 5: "Cobb" (1994).

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway. (718-638-5000)—A program of Chinese and Chinese-American films. Jan. 17 at 7: "Raise the Red Lantern" (1997, Zhang Yimou). . . . Jan. 18 at 2: "The Blue Kite" (1993, Tian Zhuanghuang). . . . Jan. 19 at 1: "Rouge" (1988, Stanley Kwan) and "Peking Opera Blues" (1986, Tsui Hark).

Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (864-5400)—Jan. 21 at 7: "Breathless" (1959, Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Jean-Paul Belmondo and Jean Seberg. . . . Jan. 21 at 9: "They Live by Night" (1949, Nicholas Ray), with Farley Granger, Cathy O'Donnell, Howard da Silva, and Jay C. Flippen.

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—Jan. 15-16 at 7: "Through the Olive Trees" (1994, Abbas Kiarostami). . . . ¶ A program of films by Sacha Guitry; in French, with English subtitles. Jan. 15 at 9: "Lovers and Thieves" (†). . . . Jan. 16 at 9: "Remontons les Champs-Elysées" (1938). . . . ¶ Jan. 15 at 9:30: "Wings of Desire" (†). . . . ¶ Jan. 16 at 8:30: "Night & Fog in Japan" (1960, Nagisa Oshima; in Japanese). . . . ¶ Jan. 17 at 8, Jan. 18-19 at 3:30 and 8, and Jan. 20-21 at 8: "Ulysses' Gaze" (1995, Theo Angelopoulos). . . . ¶ Jan. 18-19 at 4: "2 x 50 Years of French Cinema" (1995, Jean-Luc Godard; in French). . . . ¶ Jan. 18 at 6: A program of films by Marie Menken. . . . ¶ A program of films by Mike Leigh. Jan. 18 at 8:30: "Home Sweet Home" (†). . . . Jan. 19 at 8:30: "Permissive Society" (1975) and "Mike Leigh Season" (1982). . . . ¶ Jan. 19 at 6: "The Great Blondino" (1967, Bob Nelson) and "Blue Shut" (1970, Nelson). . . . ¶ Jan. 20 at 9: "Gold" (1972, Bob Levi). . . . ¶ Jan. 21 at 7: "A Man Escaped" (1956, Robert Bresson; in French).

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St.—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Jan. 19 at 7, the feature will be "The Blue Lagoon" (1980, Randal Kleiser), with Christopher Atkins and Brooke Shields.



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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

MR. McGOVERN GOES TO WASHINGTON

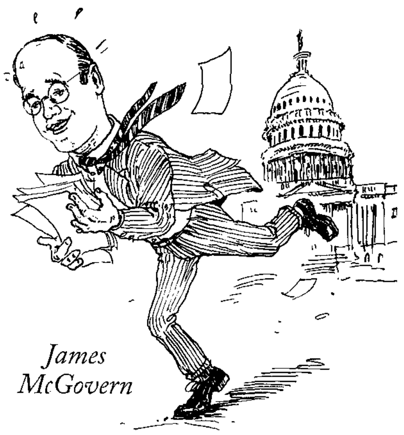
JAMES McGOVERN has spent much of his adult life working as an aide to Congressman Joe Moakley. Last week, McGovern returned to Washington—this time as a freshman member of the 105th Congress, representing the Third District in Massachusetts. Here is how he spent his first day:

At 8:20 A.M., McGovern, who is thirty-seven, partly bald, and bookish-looking, sat behind his oak desk in obscurely located quarters, recently vacated by Sonny Bono, in the Cannon House Office Building. Behind him hung a painting of St. Patrick chasing the snakes out of Ireland—a testament to the congressman-elect's penchant for holding fast to his ideals. In a district that is strongly pro-life, pro-capital punishment, and pro-welfare reform, he ran in favor of abortion rights, in favor of abolition of the death penalty, and against the new welfare bill. He won because the voters found him likable and supported his positive stands on universal health care and education. The most urgent piece of opening-day business was, of course, the vote on whether to return the ethically challenged Newt Gingrich to another term as Speaker of the House. Under the gaze of St. Pat, McGovern called the Speaker's troubles "a black eye for the whole institution."

The freshman's first decision was to cancel the eight-thirty staff meeting, owing to late-night revelry the previous evening. At one point more than a hundred McGovern constituents had been heard chanting "Jimmy's gonna fight! Jimmy's gonna lead! Jimmy's gonna make us *prooouud!*" at a party in suburban Virginia.

While McGovern conferred with Special Assistant Christine Leonard, his other aides arrived. One was put to work stocking the bathroom with toothpaste and mouthwash. Another wanted to know where to buy nametags for the eleven-o'clock reception for which two hundred guests were expected to welcome McGovern and the other new members of the Massachusetts delegation. Meanwhile, the congressman-elect addressed himself to such issues as who should get tickets to his swearing-in ceremony (three for his wife, Lisa; four for his mom) and what was the best time for Ted Kennedy to drop by the reception (anytime).

Starting at nine, McGovern participated in his first Democratic Caucus meeting (ninety minutes), gave his first TV feed to the folks back home (five minutes), and attended the reception (forty-five minutes). At noon, it was time for the congressman-elect to become a congressman. Walking to the House floor, McGovern was joined by, among others, George McGovern, for whom he had worked as a college student. The elder McGovern told the younger McGovern that it was forty years almost to the day since he had been sworn in as a freshman representative from South Dakota.


James McGovern

The Gingrich drama occupied much of the new congressman's first afternoon in the House. Afterward, he hurried back to his office, which was now filled with floral arrangements and with constituents eating chocolate-chip cookies, and taking turns sitting in the black leather chair behind the oak desk. A documentary-film crew recorded McGovern saying into a phone, "Look, I'm the congressman now, and I make the decisions. If I change my mind on this one, I think you should send me home."

At four, McGovern raced off to a meeting of Democrats on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. He was grabbed by Joe Kennedy, who sent him instead to a vote that had just been called on a new rules package. McGovern made it to the House floor just before the clock ticked zero and voted no.

Back in his office, Leonard reminded McGovern that he was expected in C-SPAN's studio at six-thirty the following morning; that the Progressive Caucus wanted a copy of his maiden speech on how to be a liberal and win elections, to be delivered on Thursday; that the Caucus on Armenian Issues wanted to know if he could meet with the Armenian Prime Minister on Wednesday. Just before leaving for another reception in his honor, at seven, McGovern allowed himself a moment of reflection: "To see the look in my mother's and father's eyes that their son turned out O.K., to have George McGovern give me a big hug and tell me how proud he was, to look out on that floor and see all that history right there and feel that I can be part of it—I've got to admit, that's something that doesn't happen every day."

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JARRETT HUDDLESTON

GRACE UNDER PRESSURE

At last week's meeting of the Parents Association of the Grace Church School, a private institution in Greenwich Village, the school's head, George Davison, rose to remind the parents—there were about sixty—of the letter he had sent them just before the Christmas holiday. The letter read, in part, "There is a private psychiatric clinic for convicted sex offenders who are on parole or probation located in the building on the southwest corner of Broadway and 11th Street"—about a hundred and fifty yards from the school's playground.

The Parents Association did not permit a reporter to attend the meeting, but, according to one mother, Vicky Ort, the headmaster's presentation was punctuated by a series of gasps. The first came when Davison explained that the clinic conducts five or six sessions a day, with eleven to fifteen men per session, and that patients come and go freely from eleven in the morning until seven-thirty at night; the second occurred when he noted that half the men were convicted or admitted pedophiles; and the third came when he explained that a significant number of the state's sex offenders on parole or probation had been assigned to the clinic. "Everybody just went nuts," Ort later recalled at the neighborhood Starbucks. But nothing, she said, rivalled the reaction Davison got when he read from an article that appeared last April in the *News*. The article was occasioned by the sentencing of John Rosado, a Brooklyn man who had sexually assaulted a nanny, an eleven-year-old girl, and one other woman, two of the assaults on the same block as the clinic, to which he had been assigned after serving fourteen years for a previous sex crime. Davison noted that Rosado had been hanging out across the street, at Corner Billiards pool hall. Ort said that what really shocked her was the fact that the clinic had been placed in such a neighborhood at all. "You come out on Broadway and there's a playground," Ort said. "What better place to find your next victim?"

The situation was not quite so clear-cut to one of the clinic's two chief psychotherapists, Kay Jackson, who once put public safety ahead of her professional code by informing police of the imminent release of a particularly unrepentant offender. (The story was recounted in this magazine in 1995.) Jackson said that, aside from the Rosado attacks, the clinic has coexisted with Grace Church (and with a nearby public school and an N.Y.U. dorm) for six years without incident. She added, "It's a misconception that sex offenders are more likely to perpetrate around the area where they receive treatment. I don't know what reassures people about sex offenders except to say that treated sex offenders commit crimes at a much lower rate than untreated offenders."

Davison, in the meantime, had been urging his state senator, Catherine Abate, a former Grace Church School mother, to prevail on the clinic to move to a new location. And, perhaps because this was Greenwich Village and not East Harlem, the issue quickly travelled all the way to Governor Pataki's director of criminal justice, Paul Shechtman. When Shechtman offered to help Jackson find office space elsewhere in Manhattan, she reluctantly agreed to coöperate. "I'm not interested in being in opposition to the community," she said, while noting that as a private practitioner she was under no legal obligation to comply with the state's request. Although Jackson herself is the mother of two small children, the fears of the Grace Church School parents seemed to weigh less heavily with her than the challenge of treating sex offenders. "I'm sure," she said, "that the folks at the school will rest comfortably under the illusion that they've solved the problem."

FATHER'S PHRASE

My father mellowed as his hair turned gray.
Though clods and con men cluttered up his day,
"A very worthy person," he would say,
lifting his eyebrows in a certain way.

—Virginia Hamilton Adair

EYES ON THE PRIZE

Last May, New York University was faced with finding a new dean to run the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service—a task that one member of the search committee characterized as trying to get a date for "the wallflower at the prom." Founded in the New Deal year of 1938, the school has long had a reputation for being politically out of step, concentrating on urban problem-solving in an age when Washington has been the mecca for public-service careerists. During the Reagan years, for example, the school's enrollment fell from twelve hundred to five hundred students. To help in its search, the committee hired the headhunting firm of Isaacson, Miller, a Boston-based outfit specializing in filling top posts at not-for-profit organizations. Surprisingly, the wallflower turned into a prom queen.

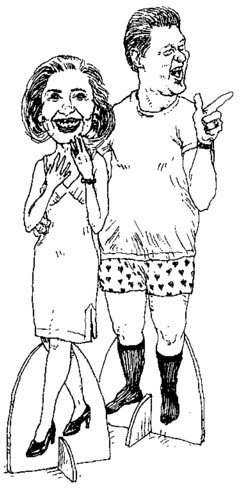
An eleven-page "Invitation to Apply" sent to about a hundred potential candidates elicited an unexpected response. A number of high-level refugees from the Clinton Administration enthusiastically submitted résumés. After eight months, a short list emerged: Representative Pat Schroeder, of Colorado; Dick Celeste, the former governor of Ohio; Jo Ivey Boufford, a principal deputy assistant secretary for Health and Human Services; and Margaret Hamburg, the New York City Commissioner of Health. As of last week, the inside betting was on Boufford, who served as president of the city's Health and Hospitals Corporation before going to Washington. Stephanie Creaturo, the student representative on the search committee, said, "She's not glitzy or glamorous, but she's solid. And if she can run H.H.C., then the Wagner School must be child's play."

To the group's chairman, Roy Sparrow, the search experience signals a new interest in public service—and is a sign that the school's time has arrived. "In the previous era of big government," he said, "the purpose of public-service careers was to implement things decided in Washington and to modify things carried out from above. Wagner can be the first school to train new leaders for *local* action and responsibility."

Indeed, what may have been the most compelling passage in the invitational letter was the declaration that the school "needs a Dean who can persuade a large and influential group of New Yorkers . . . that the Wagner School offers the best general defense of the entire New York civic enterprise." As Pat Schroeder, who recently retired from Congress after twenty-four years, said last week, "New York's problems are not so different from Tokyo's or Rio de Janeiro's. If you don't solve them, then everyone will flee to gated communities."

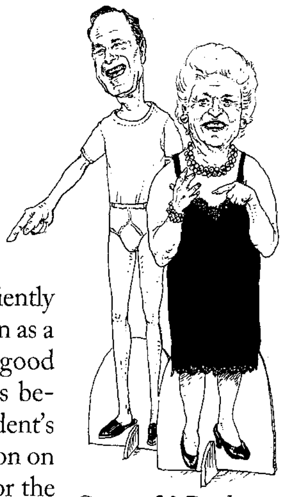
DEBRIEFINGS

WHAT to wear? And what to wear under *that*? With the President's Inaugural Balls fast approaching, these are besetting questions for the thousands of invited guests. Those with a historical turn of mind might want to consult one of the world's leading authorities on Presidential apparel, Tom Tierney, who is the creator of sixteen books of paper dolls, published by Dover, that depict the sartorial proclivities of the nation's First Families. Each volume in the series, which begins with "George Washington and His Family" and includes most of the prominent First Families up to "Bill Clinton and His Family," features sixteen pages of figures and various pieces of apparel, all waiting to be cut out and assembled, according to how one wishes to robe—or disrobe—members of Presidential menageries. Many of the pages afford a surreal delight. Even in nothing but a slip, Hillary Clinton seems haunted by one of her famously mutating hairdos, which hovers off to the side in midair. A Ronald Reagan ensemble, circa 1940, requires him to wear, as it were, his first bride, Jane Wyman, on his arm. The Teddy Roosevelt book includes the family pet pig and badger. Most charmingly, each volume opens with full-body miniatures of the President and the First Lady—the two of them stoically oblivious of the fact that they're standing in nothing but their underwear or a bathing suit.



Hillary & Bill

Tierney, who does his Presidential deconstructions in a studio near Poughkeepsie, was a well-known fashion illustrator whose drawings graced department-store ads in New York newspapers in the fifties and sixties. In the seventies, he reinvented himself. Tierney, who says that he bases his ensembles on "educated guesses," presciently pegged Clinton as a boxer man a good twelve months before the President's MTV revelation on the subject. For the record, Bush and Reagan sport briefs, while Nixon, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Ford are in boxers.



George & Barbara

Tierney's First Ladies all wear slips or bathing suits. "I try to be as tasteful as possible," he points out. "After all, these are Presidential wives, and you don't want to be getting too raucous." Pat Nixon is presented in a full yellow number, "with sheer edging at bosom and hemline," according to Tierney's back-page notes. Barbara Bush's slip is, surprisingly, black. Things get more raucous with the Presidential daughters and sons-in-law. Tricia Nixon Cox is shown in a "one-piece, sheer, elasticized lace bodysuit which doubles as a foundation garment and underwear." Her husband, Edward, wears a purple "paisley-patterned knit A-shirt with matching knitted briefs, typical of the 'Peacock Revolution' of the sixties."

One First In-Law who complained was Patrick Nugent. He is shown in a sleeveless undershirt and elasticized boxers, gawking at his bride, Luci Bird Johnson. Tierney recalls, "Nugent seemed to feel that he should have been spared this indignity, because in the meantime they'd divorced. But he should never have married into the family with an attitude like that. Once you go through that door, you're history."

For all his painstaking devotion to First Families, Tierney sees his project as populist at heart. He says, "It does help to remind everybody that even these people, exalted as they may be, have to climb into their trousers one leg at a time."

MANHATTAN TRANSFER

A FRIEND writes:

A visitor to the city, pent up in his room at, say, the Mayflower Hotel, on Central Park West, turns on television with a heightened sense of expectation. The medium, so often described as "cool," feels hotter here, more important, closer to real life. Sitcoms emanate from these same streets, and the major networks have their studios a few blocks away. The other evening, I watched the six-o'clock news, which featured a fire in the "midtown" apartment of the elderly jazz great Lionel Hampton: flames flickered and smoke poured out of horizontal apartment windows, and the great vibraphonist, seated in a wheelchair, dazed but courteous, was interviewed as to his rescue, his emotions, his anticipation of an imminent scheduled meeting with President Clinton at the White House to receive the National Medal of Arts. This was news. I ventured outside onto the windblown streets in search of a sandwich, and at a corner two blocks from the hotel a small cluster of people were staring up. I stared up with them, and saw a towering sheet of horizontal windows, including a darkened one with the glass and the mullions knocked out of it. It looked like the one I had just seen on television. It *was* the one. This was reality. I was "midtown." A young man in the crowd was expounding to anyone who would listen: "That fire up there was on television this afternoon, it was on the evening news, it will still be on the morning news tomorrow!" We all clucked and muttered in something like agreement and shared excitement. I had become, momentarily, a voice in the crowd, a New Yorker, full of the proud sense that to be in New York is to be in the news, or close to it. ◆

"Mr. McGovern Goes to Washington," Eric Alterman; "Grace Under Pressure," James Traub; "Eyes on the Prize," Katherine Eban Finkelstein; "Debriefings," Lawrence Weschler; "Manhattan Transfer," John Updike.

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LETTER FROM RWANDA

THE RETURN

With a million exiles coming home, killers and genocide survivors are being forced to live together.

BY PHILIP GOUREVITCH

“A CERTAIN Girumuhatse is back,” an old woman in the highlands of central Rwanda told me late last November. She spoke in Kinyarwanda, the language of the country, and as she spoke her right hand described a graceful chopping motion against the side of her neck. Her full statement was translated like this: “A certain Girumuhatse is back, who beat me during the war with a stick, and from whom I received a machete blow also. This man threw me in a ditch after killing off my whole family. I was wounded. He’s now at his house again. I saw him yesterday at the community office after he registered. I told him, ‘Behold, I am risen from the dead,’ and he replied, ‘It was a human Hell,’ and he asked my pardon. He said, ‘It was the fault of the authorities who led us in these acts, seeking their own gains.’ He said he regretted it, and he asked my pardon.”

Laurencie Nyirabeza (left) says that Jean Girumuhatse killed ten members of her family. He returned in November, and is once again her neighbor. Photographs by Jack Picone.

NETWORK PHOTOGRAPHERS, U.K.

The woman gave her name as Laurencie Nyirabeza. She was born in 1930, in the community of Taba, a few minutes’ walk from where we met, in the shade of an empty hilltop market above a small commercial center—two short rows of derelict concrete and adobe storefronts on either side of a sandy red-dirt road. Twice a week, on market days, the center is teeming; the rest of the time, it has the air of a ghost town. The rusting hull of a burned-out bus lies on the road’s shoulder, and thick bushes sprout from the prominent ruins of a large home.

The home belonged to Tutsis, killed in the genocide of 1994. Most of Taba’s Tutsis were killed then. Those who remain, like Nyirabeza, are quite alone. Rwandans tend to count the members of their extended households in double digits; for Taba’s survivors, most of whom are women, two or three is a big family. The houses of nearly all of them were destroyed. With no means to rebuild, and afraid to stay amid neighbors whose conduct during the killings they remember too well, many survivors moved to squat in the stores left vacant by dead Tutsis or by Hutus who had fled Rwanda after the genocide. Now they feared eviction. In the preceding two weeks, at least six hundred thousand Hutus had marched back into Rwanda from refugee camps in Zaire. Of these, more than two thousand had returned to Taba, and among them was the man—Girumuhatse—who Nyirabeza said had massacred her family and left her, too, for dead.

Nyirabeza is a small woman, with eyes set deep in a face that thrusts forward. She wears her hair combed straight up from the slope of her forehead, in a crown nearly six inches high. The effect is at once imposing and witty, which is in keeping with her manner. More than a dozen survivors had gathered to meet me in the market, but most said nothing. The voices of those who did speak rarely rose above a furtive murmur, and whenever a stranger approached everyone fell silent. Nyirabeza was different. She did not whisper or shrink. She seemed to feel that she had little left to lose. Even as she told me about Girumuhatse, her lips occasionally twitched in a smile, and more than once the other survivors responded to her speech with edgy laughter. Like nearly nine out of ten Rwandans, Nyirabeza is a simple peasant; her schooling ended after the third grade. But she had a way with words—spirited and wry, and barbed with the indignation of her injury. Still, she said that she was shocked speechless when Girumuhatse, her former neighbor, with whom she used to share food and drink, claimed that his acts were not his fault. Girumuhatse, she told me, had killed ten members of her family, mostly her children and grandchildren.

"This man, who is responsible for his acts," Nyirabeza said, "lives now with all his family and gets his property back, while I remain alone, without a child, without a husband." Then she said—and this was one time when there was a ripple of laughter—"Maybe he will continue these acts of extermination." She scoffed at Girumuhatse's request for her pardon. She said, "If he can bring back my children that he killed, and if he rebuilds my house—maybe."

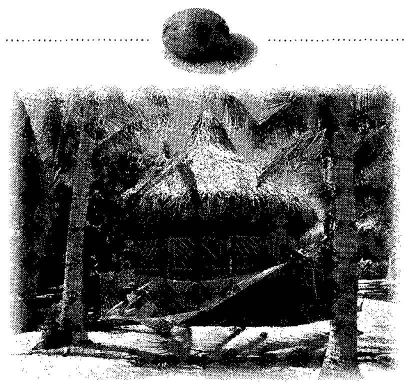
There was more laughter from the survivors. Then a man said wearily, "We'll live together as usual," and Nyirabeza walked away. A moment later, a woman began weeping, hiding her face in her dress. Another woman, very old and leaning on a long, thin staff, held out her hands, and flapped them up and away from her body. "We're just like birds," she said, with a distant smile. "Flying around, blown around."

As I walked back down the hill, I found Nyirabeza crouched on a stone, staring out over the valley. She did not look up when I said goodbye. A young civil servant, who had been helping me as a translator, was a survivor himself, and he told me that people generally don't like to visit the center. "It's sad," he said, "and the survivors there ask for things."

It was true that the survivors made heavy demands. At one point, Nyirabeza had said, "I wait only for justice."

IN the early days after the genocide, it was easy to find perpetrators, especially in the refugee camps surrounding Rwanda, who admitted to taking part in the killings, and even boasted about it. During the slaughter, every organ of the state had been dedicated to mobilizing the entire Hutu majority, of more than six million, to eliminate the entire Tutsi minority, of at least a million. Known Hutu opponents of the regime were the first to be assassinated, and then at least eight hundred thousand Tutsis were killed in just a hundred days. Although most of Rwanda's Hutus did not kill, few actively resisted the program, and, because most killers worked in groups, several people often had a hand in a single death. Clearly, hundreds of thousands participated directly in the torture, mutilation, and murder of Tutsis, and many more acted in complicity with the killers. Yet by the time I began visiting Rwanda, nearly two years ago, the criminals had recognized that confession was a tactical error. In Rwanda's prisons and in the camps, I could not find anyone who would even agree that there had been a genocide. There had been a civil war, and, yes, there had been some massacres, but nobody acknowledged seeing anything.

So it surprised me when Laurencie Nyirabeza said that Girumuhatse had not denied attacking her. I wanted to hear what Girumuhatse had to say for himself, and two days later I returned to Taba with a French-speaking Rwandan named Bosco, an unemployed florist, who had agreed to come along as a translator. We stopped first to see Nyirabeza, because she had suggested that Girumuhatse might still want to kill her. She had reason to be concerned; the testimony of survivors is the principal evidence for the arrest of genocide suspects in Rwanda, and in the past year hundreds of survivor witnesses had been killed. But Nyirabeza refused to be intimidated. She sent a young woman



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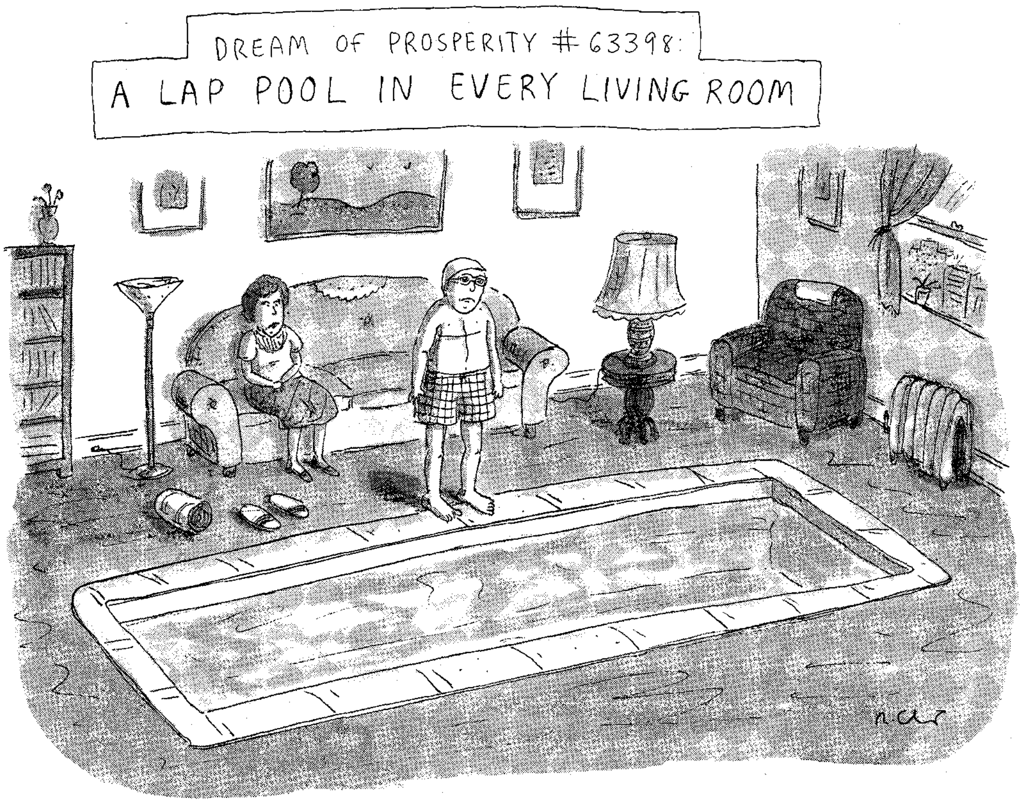
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with us to point out Girumuhatse's place—an adobe compound that stood about a hundred yards away from the abandoned shop where Nyirabeza was living, at the edge of a steep hill planted with bananas.

A young man sat in the doorway. He had just returned from Zaire with his family, and he said he had lived in this house in 1994, when "there were many killings." On his return, he found a survivor family living there. He knew that government policy allowed returnees fifteen days to evict squatters, but the survivors had nowhere to go, so the two families were living together.

The young man said his name was Emanuel Habyarimana. I asked if there were any other men around who had come back from Zaire, and he said, "None living in these houses here." As Bosco and I walked back to the road, a pack of children crowded around us, and we asked them if they knew Girumuhatse. They laughed, and said he lived in the house that we'd just been visiting, and was probably inside. "No," a girl said. "That's him down there." She pointed into the valley, at a figure climbing toward us along a path. Bosco quickly produced a few banknotes and dispatched the kids to buy themselves sodas.

For a moment, the man appeared to be trying to get away. He turned off into a field, but Bosco hailed him and waved, and he came back up the path, moving with a long, swinging gait. He wore a sort of soiled canvas lab coat, open over a thin blue shirt, and shabby brown pants and sandals cut from old tires. His eyes were narrow and heavily bloodshot, and his mouth was bunched up tight. He stood freely before us, but he had the aspect of someone cornered. His chest heaved, and although the day was cool, sweat kept beading at his temples and trickling down his forehead.

Bosco struck up a conversation. The man said that Emanuel, whom we'd just met, was his son, and that it was good to be back. We talked about the camps in Zaire, which had served as a rump Rwandan state, controlled by the genocidal military and militias. I said that whenever I'd visited the camps everyone I spoke with had denied the genocide and had maintained instead that since the end of the war all the Hutus who remained in Rwanda were being systematically killed. (According to one rumor circulating in Zaire last year, women who returned to Rwanda had their breasts cut off, and men were put in the equivalent of doghouses with floors deep in wet plaster.) "It sometimes happens that some people tell lies and others tell the truth," the man said. "There were a lot of dead here."

The man introduced himself as Jean Girumuhatse. I told him that name was familiar, because it was said around Taba that he had killed a whole family. "It's true," Girumuhatse said. "They say I killed because I was the leader of the roadblock right here." He pointed to a spot on the road, where it passed closest to his house. "Right now, all is well," he told me. "But then, at that time, we were called on by the state to kill. You were told you had the duty to do this or you'd be imprisoned or killed. We were just pawns in this. We were just tools."

Girumuhatse, who said he was forty-six years old, did not know of any Hutus who had been executed simply for declining to kill, and I have never found anybody who could name such a martyr. Apparently, to insure mass participation in murder it had been enough to issue the threat—kill or be killed—and to reward killers with bounty and status. Rwandans never tire of explaining the perfect machinery of this mass mentality, the intricate pyramidal pecking order of coercion and obedience, refined by the old, feudal colonial order and retooled under the post-independence Hutu dictatorships into an engine of genocide. One former refugee I talked with said, "There are superiors"—he turned his eyes skyward—"who concern themselves with politics and affairs of humanity. And there are the simple people like us"—his eyes rolled down to stare at his feet—"who know nothing of politics and merely work with our hands to eat and live."

But Girumuhatse ran a roadblock. During the genocide, roadblocks were set up all over the country to catch Tutsis. To be the chief of a roadblock was to be not a pawn but a mid-level figure in the local chain of command—a mover of pawns. Girumuhatse said he had had no choice. Yet at the same time he told me, "In most cases with the killing, it's my responsibility, because I was the leader, and now that I'm back I will tell all to the authorities."

WHEN the mass repatriation from Zaire began, on November 15th, the government of Rwanda ordered a moratorium on arrests of suspected genocide perpetrators. In a month of extraordinary developments, this was surely the most unexpected. More than eighty-six thousand Rwandans were already in detention within Rwanda on allegations of genocide, and at least as many of Rwanda's most wanted were known to be among the refugees in Zaire. As the return got under way, it was widely reported that the genocidal military and militias had retreated deeper into Zaire, allowing the so-called ordinary refugees to head home. But inside Rwanda it was immediately clear that a great many people with crimes to answer for had melted into the flood of returnees.

"To you we were just dots in the mass," one returnee observed, after I had spent the first days of the migration driving through the boiling swarm on the road in Zaire. They had always sworn, in the camps, that they would go home as they had come—en masse, as one. To be dots in the mass was precisely the point: it was impossible to know who was who. They came at a rate of twelve thousand an hour (two hundred a minute), a human battering ram aimed at the frontier. But this wasn't the invasion long promised by the extremist Hutu leadership; rather, it was a retreat from exile, conducted in near-silence. At one point, through the men and women and children pouring over fifty miles of blacktop, pushing bicycles, motorbikes, and wheelbarrows, dragging wooden crates like sleds, balancing enormous bundles on their heads, toting babies in slings and cradling them in their arms, carrying steamer trunks and empty beer bottles, and sometimes carrying nothing but the burden of their pasts, there came four men shouldering a blanket-draped figure on a stretcher. As they pushed through the knotted thousands, one kept saying, "A cadaver, a cadaver." What made this man singular was his need to declare himself. Except for the knock of cooking pots, the swish of bare feet and rubber sandals, and the bleat of a stray goat or a lost child, the homecoming mob, as a rule, was ominously mute.

Back in Rwanda, thousands stood for hours along the roads watching the influx with the same wordless intensity. Never before in modern memory have a people who slaughtered another people, or in whose name the slaughter was carried out, and the remainder of the people that was slaughtered been asked to live completely intermingled in the same tiny communities, as one cohesive national society.

In 1994, the radio rallied the masses to kill. Last November, the radio once again explained how things stood. Everyone heard, for instance, that President Pasteur Bizimungu had gone to the border to welcome the returnees as brothers and sisters. A version of the President's message was repeatedly broadcast on Radio Rwanda, and throughout the country his words were being studied for guidance. After calling the mass return "a tremendous joy for all Rwandans," the President said, "The Rwandan people were able to live together peacefully for six hundred years, and there is no reason they can't live together in peace again." And he addressed the killers directly: "Let me appeal to those who have chosen the murderous and confrontational path, by reminding them that they, too, are Rwandans. I am calling upon you to abandon your genocidal and destructive ways, join hands with other Rwandans, and put that energy to better use." Then he said, "Once again, welcome home."

But why should survivors be asked to live next door to killers—even, as happened in Girumuhatse's house, under the same roof? Why put off confronting the problem? To keep things calm, I was told by Major General Paul Kagame, who is Rwanda's Vice-President and Minister of Defense and its most powerful political leader. "You just don't necessarily go for everyone you might think you should go for," he told me. "Maybe you create an atmosphere where things are stabilized first. Then you go for those you must go for. Others you can even ignore, for the sake of gradually leading a kind of peaceful coexistence." Kagame recognized that this was asking a lot of his people; and, following the return, there were numerous reports of soldiers rescuing alleged killers from angry mobs and placing them in "protective custody." It would not be easy, Kagame said, to balance the demands for justice and for order. "In between these two intentions," he said, "there are problems—there are the feelings of people."

As soon as Girumuhatse told me that he was a killer, he stopped sweating. His breath came more easily. His eyes even looked clearer, and he seemed eager to keep talking. A storm had blown in, dumping rain, so we moved into my jeep, which was parked right where Girumuhatse's roadblock had stood during the genocide. As we settled in, he announced that one reason he had been under pressure to kill during the genocide was that he had been told to kill his wife, a Tutsi.

"I was able to save my wife, because I

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was the leader," he said, adding that he had feared for his own life, too. "I had to do it or I'd be killed," he said. "So I feel a bit innocent. Killing didn't come from my heart. If it was really my wish to kill, I couldn't now come back." Girumuhatse's voice was unnervingly cozy beneath the thrum of the rain. Did he, at least, also feel a bit guilty? He appeared unmoved when he told me, "I knew many of the people that I ordered killed." I asked how many deaths he had ordered. He was slow in answering: "I know of six people who were killed before my eyes by my orders."

"Did you never kill with your own hands?"

"It's possible I did that," Girumuhatse said. "Because if I didn't they would kill my wife."

"Possible?" I said. "Or true?"

Bosco, the translator, said, "You know what he means," and didn't translate the question.

Girumuhatse reiterated his wish to explain everything to the authorities. As he understood it, he was being allowed to recover his property and his health after the road—"and then they will call me." He wasn't afraid. If he told all, he believed, he would get "a limited punishment." He said, "The authorities understand that many just followed orders."

Girumuhatse had the government's policy almost right. Last August, after months of debate about how best to ask Rwanda's decimated justice system to handle the seemingly impossible burden of genocide cases, the parliament adopted a special genocide law, which categorizes responsibility for the crime according to the perpetrator's position in the genocidal hierarchy, and offers sentence reductions for lower-level criminals who confess. Although all murderers are liable to the death penalty under Rwanda's standard penal code, the genocide law reserves execution only for the élites defined in Category 1: "Planners, organizers, instigators, supervisors, and leaders . . . at the national, prefectural, communal sector or cell level," as well as "notorious murderers who, by virtue of the zeal or excessive malice with which they committed atrocities, distinguished themselves" and perpetrators of "acts of sexual torture." (An initial roster of Category 1 suspects lists fewer than two thousand names; trials began last month, and the first two ended with death sentences on January 3rd.) For the vast remainder of rank-and-file killers and their accomplices—the followers—the maximum penalty of life imprisonment can be whittled down, with a valid confession and a guilty plea, to as little as seven years. Penalties for non-lethal assault and for property crimes are comparably reducible.

Girumuhatse had absorbed the spirit of the new law. "If it can end that way, and after being punished I can return to my home and recover my life, I would accept that," he told me. "If this vengeance can end in this country and wrongdoers can be punished, that would be best." What he didn't seem to grasp was that his leadership position during the genocide placed him firmly in Category 1, where the death penalty cannot be staved off with a confession.

Even as Girumuhatse prepared to tell all, he laid the blame for his crimes on the former mayor of Taba, Jean Paul Akayesu, who had been a famously avid hunter of Tutsis, and who had installed Girumuhatse as the roadblock leader. (In 1995, Akayesu was arrested in Zambia, and last week he was brought to trial before the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, where he, too, is expected to offer a defense of just following orders.)

The genocide "was like a dream," Girumuhatse told me. "It came from the regime like a nightmare." Now, it seemed, he had not so much waked up as entered a new dream, in which his confession and his pat enthusiasm for Rwanda's reform—"The new regime is quite good. There are no dead. We were surprised by the welcome. There is a new order"—did not require any fundamental change of politics or heart. He remained a middleman, aspiring to be a model citizen and to reap the rewards. When the authorities said kill, he killed, and when the authorities said confess he confessed.

"We like you, Hatcher, and we value your work, but we've been offered magic beans."

BETWEEN my visits to Taba, I talked to an aid worker in Kigali who had just returned from western Tanzania, where close to five hundred thousand Rwandan Hutus still remained in refugee camps. (In mid-December, Tanzania closed the camps and repatriated the Rwandans, bringing the total number of returnees to more than a million.) During his trip to the camps, the aid worker had heard that children there had a game of making clay figures and putting them in the road to be run over by passing vehicles. The clay figures represented Tutsis, and each time one was crushed the children cheered, because they believed they had just caused a Tutsi to die in Rwanda. The aid worker told me this story as a sort of parable. It made him wonder whether it wasn't simply Rwanda's destiny to endure another round of mass butchery. That possibility is all too obvious, and Rwanda's post-genocide

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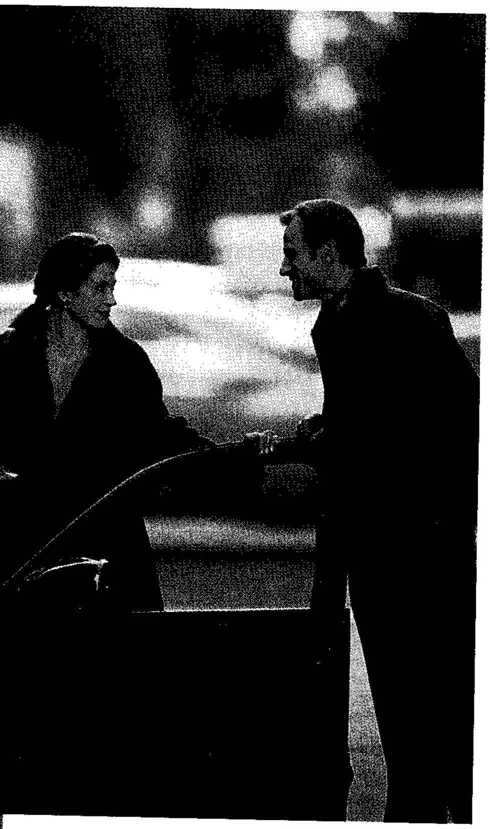

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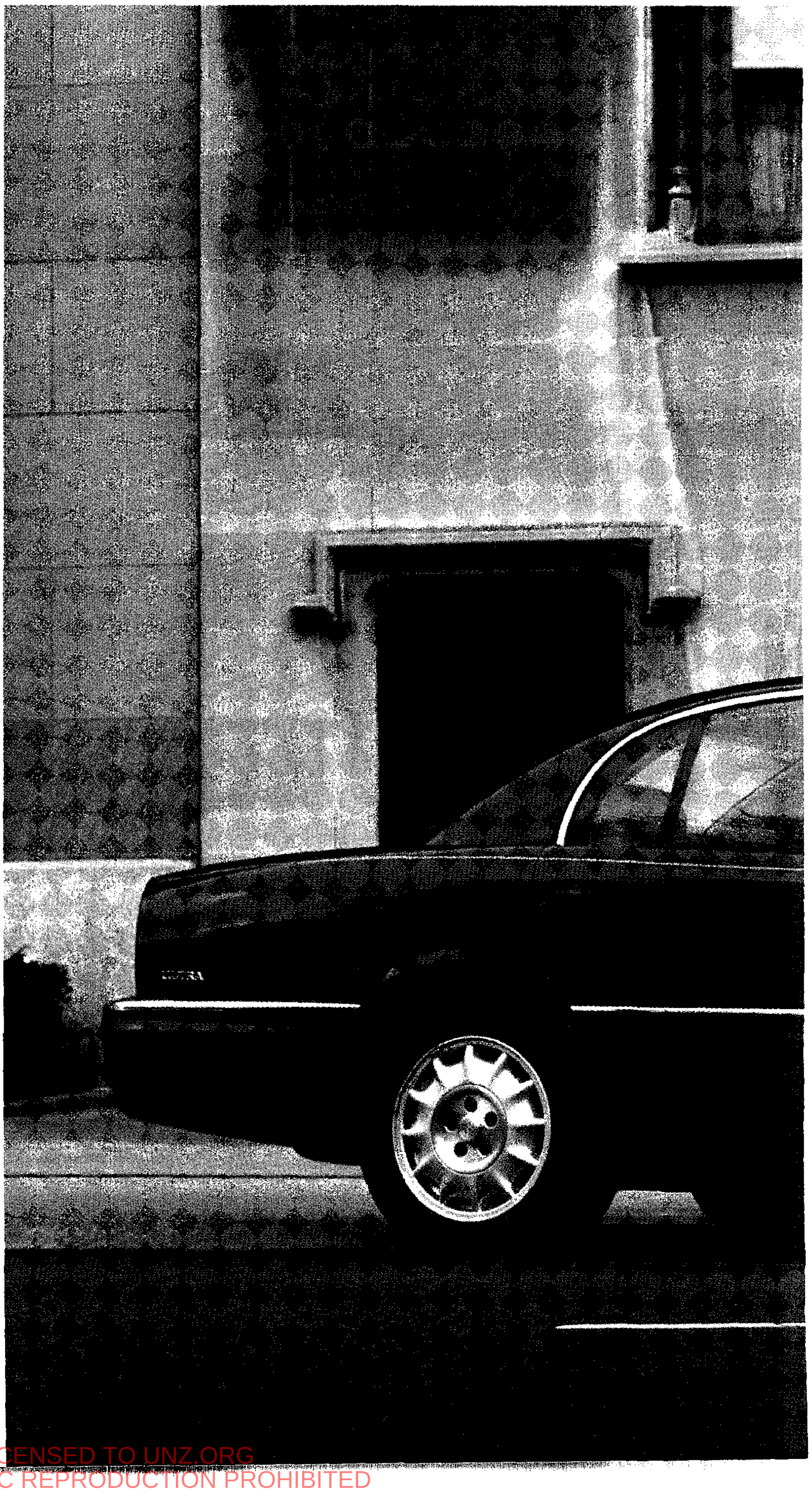

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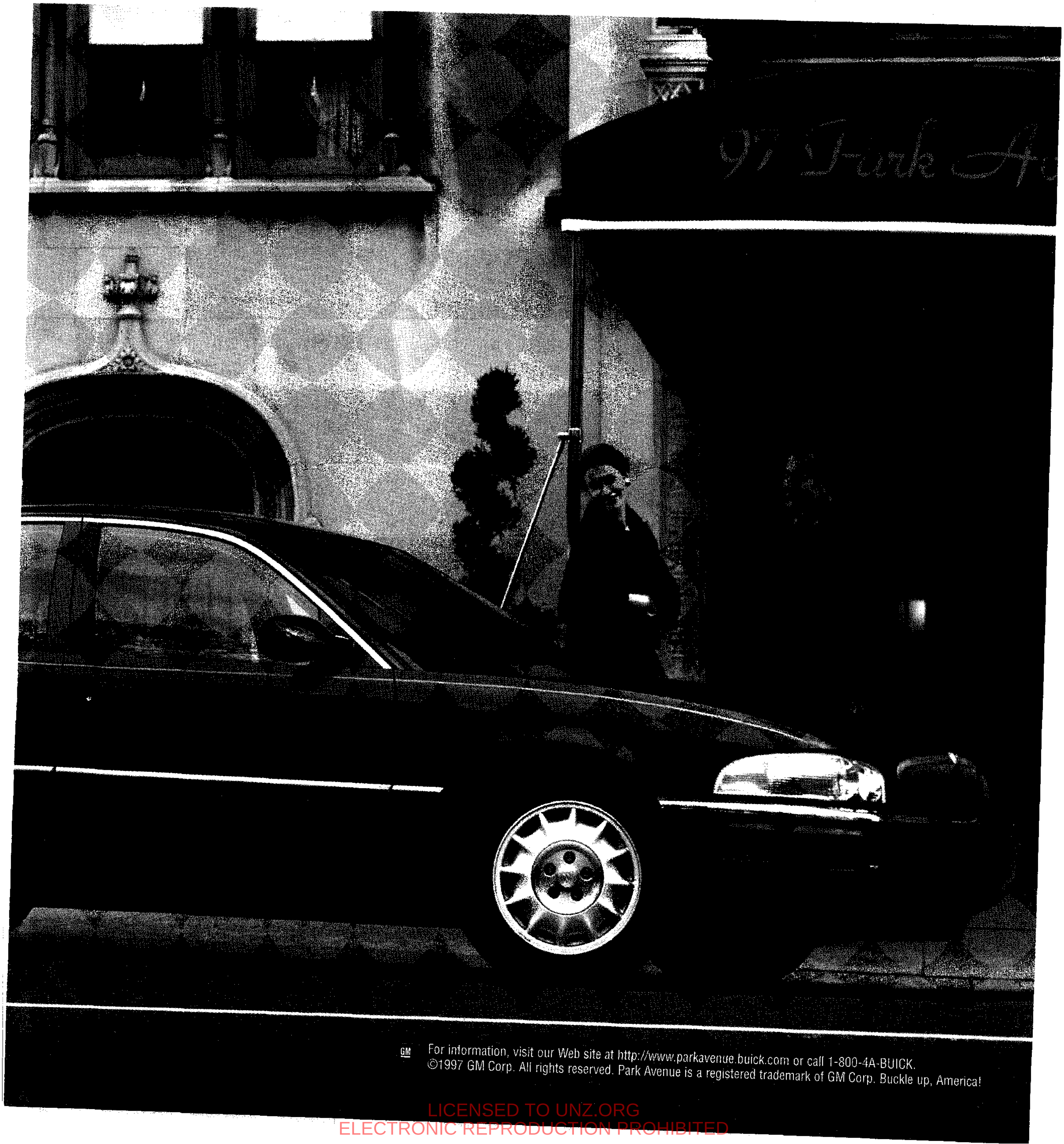

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government has staked its credibility on proving that systematic murder between Hutus and Tutsis is avoidable.

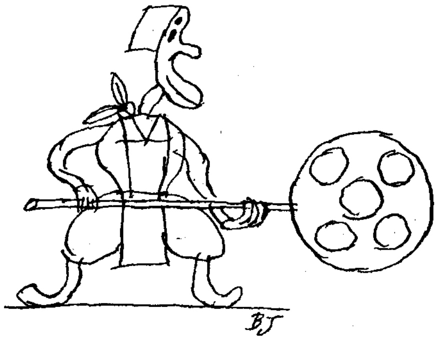
The first step, the new leaders believe, is to stop regarding Rwanda's problems as ethnically determined. Before, and even during, the genocide, Hutu domination was widely defended, at home and abroad, in the name of majority rule (as if being Hutu or Tutsi automatically signified a person's politics, and weren't just an accident of ancestry, like having freckles). So it provokes great vexation in Kigali that the new government is regularly described in the international press as Tutsi-dominated, or, synonymously, minority-dominated. As President Bizimungu, who is Hutu, told me recently, to speak of Tutsi domination echoes "the slogans or the way of portraying things of the extremists," when, for the first time in the hundred years since colonization, "there are authorities in this country, Hutu and Tutsi, who are putting in place policy so that people may feel comfortable in this country—share the same fundamental rights and obligations irrespective of their ethnic background—and the extremists don't feel happy with that."

The return of the refugees presents the great test of such pronouncements. As long as nearly one in five Rwandans lived in exile—in the grip of extremists at war with their homeland, and protected as refugees by the United Nations—the state remained in constant jeopardy. Kigali's position was that the Rwandans in the camps were not truly refugees, since the innocents should have nothing to fear at home and criminals are not entitled to international protection. For two years, as the government called for its people to come home, General Kagame warned that if the international community refused to meet its obligations under U.N. conventions to separate the criminals from the innocents, and disband the armed camps that sat within a few miles of Rwanda's borders, he would feel compelled to do the job himself.

The occasion for such a local solution to the international stalemate came last September, with the emergence in eastern Zaire of a rebel force, bent on toppling the thirty-one-year-old dictatorship of Mobutu Sese Seko, Zaire's ailing President. By early November, the rebels, who enjoyed Kigali's enthusiastic support, had won control of a substantial swath of Zaire along the Rwandan border, broken up the camps, and herded most of the Rwandan refugees into and around the Mugunga camp, outside the Zairean city of Goma. For a while, the United Nations Security Council geared up to deploy a humanitarian intervention force, ostensibly to rescue the refugees. But it soon became clear that such an international force would refuse to fight the Hutu militants, who were effectively holding the refugees hostage behind a powerfully armed front line. The rebels again took the offensive, encircling Mugunga and attacking it in such a way as to draw the armed elements away from the Rwandan border while pushing the refugee masses homeward.

During the days I spent on the road amid the returning six hundred thousand, I was repeatedly visited by an image—remembered or imagined from various paintings and movies—of the Napoleonic armies straggling home from Russia: limping hussars and frozen horses, blood on the snow, the sky a blackness, mad eyes fixed forward. The weather was kinder in Africa, and the people on the road were mostly in good health, but that recurrent image of another time and place made me wonder why we in the West today have so little respect for other people's wars. The great homeward trundling of these Rwandans marked the defeat, at least for the moment, of an immense army dedicated to genocide, yet the world had succored this army in the name of humanitarianism.

The opening of Mugunga was carried out with a tactical brilliance that was widely understood to show the hand of General Kagame. Rwanda denies having deployed troops in Zaire, but Kagame did not seem to mind the speculation. "Because we are not necessarily unhappy about what's happened—and, on top of that, what has happened is what we would have wished to have happened—I'm sure people would be right to suspect our involvement," he told me. Yet he regarded the victory as incomplete. "Yes, people have come back," he said. "That's one problem solved, and it has created another problem, which we also have to solve." He proceeded to name a lot of problems—housing, justice, the economy, education, the demobilization of thousands of former soldiers returning from exile, and, above all, "this issue of ethnicity."



Last August, Kagame told me two stories about men in his Army. One soldier, he said, had recently written a letter "telling me how he was left alone in his family, and he knows that some people killed his family during the genocide, and that he has chosen not to hold anybody else responsible for that, and that, instead, he has decided to take his own life, because he doesn't see what his life means anymore." As Kagame understood it, "he had somebody in mind to kill, but instead of doing that he has decided to kill himself." The letter was found after the soldier's suicide. The second story was about an officer who killed three people and wounded two in a bar. Some soldiers were about to kill the officer, but he said, "Let me tell you what the problem is, and then you can kill me." The officer was arrested, and he explained, "I've been seeing killers who've been let to just live and roam around and nobody takes action against them. Well, I decided I cannot take any more of that, so I've killed them." Then the officer said, "Go ahead and do whatever you want."

Kagame said, "People think it is a matter that we should have got over with and forgotten, and—no, no, no, no, we are dealing with human beings here." So, after the return from Zaire, I asked him whether he believed that it was possible to rehabilitate a person who had followed the logic of the genocide. "I think you can't give up on that—on such a person," he said. He insisted that minds can be changed, people can be turned around, and he told me, "I think some people can even benefit from being forgiven, being given another chance." He also said, "We have no alternative."

LAURENCIE NYIRABEZA was in a quiet mood when I returned to Taba to tell her about my meeting with Girumuhatse. But her granddaughter Chantalle, a lanky thirty-three-year-old, who had been widowed and had lost four of her five children during the genocide, filled the silence. "Even if he confesses, he's an impostor," she said of Girumuhatse. "He is lying if he says he just followed orders." According to Chantalle, the man was an

"It's this marvellous little liberal-arts college in Kansas that gives frequent-flier miles."

unreservedly self-motivated Tutsi-killer. She said that he had overseen the murder of his wife's parents "just to have the pleasure of watching them killed," and that when he found his Tutsi wife giving food to her own brother he had taken his brother-in-law and attempted to kill him, too.

Nyirabeza had accused Girumuhatse of killing ten members of her immediate family. Chantalle held Girumuhatse personally responsible for the massacre of twenty-seven people from her own extended household. He had been the leader, she said, and he had also taken part in the massacre, using a small hoe. Chantalle had escaped, with her month-old daughter on her back, only because on the morning of the killings she had seen Girumuhatse murder a cousin of hers named Oswald with a machete. After that, Chantalle sought refuge at the nearby home of her godmother, a Hutu. While she was there, she heard Girumuhatse come and ask for tea—to give him strength, he said, to kill Chantalle's father. She also said that her godmother's son, who was one of Girumuhatse's accomplices, "went behind the house to sharpen his machete and kill, but his mother forbade him to kill me." Later, the godmother told Chantalle that her son had killed Chantalle's mother. And now the godmother and her son had come back from Zaire.

All the killing that Chantalle described had happened within a few days, in one small cluster of houses, on the hill that was under Girumuhatse's command. She laughed when I told her that Girumuhatse had said he saw only six people killed on his orders. "Oh, if I could confront him!" she said at one point, but in another moment she said, "Even if I denounced him, what can it change?

"After the genocide," Chantalle said, "I had to find my own clothes alone, and I had to find my food alone, and now these people return and get food and humanitarian aid." It's true: while the international community had spent more than a billion dollars in the camps, devastated Rwanda had gone begging for a few hundred million, and the tens of thousands of survivors squatting in the ruins had been systematically ignored. Once, Chantalle told me, someone had handed out hoes to Taba's survivors. "That's all," she said. "Period."

IT is impossible to give survivors what they really want—their world just as it was in the time they call "before." But must those who were most heavily damaged by the genocide remain the most neglected in the post-genocide society? "Nobody wants to help them," Kagame's political adviser Claude Dusaidi told me. He meant no foreign donors, no aid agencies. "We say give us the money, we'll do it," he said. "Nobody is interested." Dusaidi concluded that the international community does not want to recognize the genocide that took place. "They would wish we would forget it. But the only way we are going to get to forget it is to help the survivors so that they resume normal life, and then maybe you can establish the process of forgetting."

A surprising phrase—"the process of forgetting." Discussions of genocide have become inextricably bound up in a discourse about the obligations of memory. But in Rwanda—where Pacifique Kabalisa, a survivor who works for the organization African Rights, told me that many survivors "regret that they weren't killed during the genocide"—forgetting is often longed for as a symptom of minimal recovery, the capacity to get on with life. "Before this return," Chantalle told me, "we were beginning to forget, but now it's as if you had a wound that was healing and then someone comes and reopens it."

There can be no closing of such a wound for the generation that suffered it. Instead, Rwanda's new leaders, who are masters of triage, are asking their countrymen to be stoical. When Kagame, who is a great champion of individual responsibility, said that he didn't mind if a number of killers went unpunished, I asked him whether the government's focus on the genocide as, in his words, "the defining event in Rwandan history" might be diminishing. "It may not diminish," he said. "It has to stay. But we have to change the perspective in which we look at it." It was essential, he explained, to maintain a forward momentum, not "to fall back and say, well, these Hutus killed, they must be killed, and these Tutsis were the victims, so they must now get the better of what there is in this situation." After a moment, he added, "I think there has got to be some serious thinking on the question of being rational."

At the end of November, the moratorium on arrests was partly rescinded to allow for the detention of suspects who fitted Category 1 of the genocide law. But Gerald Gahima, the Deputy Minister of Justice, told me that most killers would probably remain at large. (About a thousand returnees from Zaire and some three thousand from Tanzania have since been arrested.) In Taba alone, where the return had been relatively light, the judicial police inspector said that at least sixty Category 1 suspects had come back from Zaire. The inspector had Girumuhatse's name on his list but didn't know much about him. "It's said he killed people," he told me, and he read off some names of Girumuhatse's alleged victims, including the same Oswald whose murder Chantalle said she had witnessed, and one of her uncles whom she'd named.

Jonathan Nyandwi, one of six hundred and forty genocide prisoners in the Taba town jail, was better informed. He used to keep a bar near Girumuhatse's roadblock, and although he professed at first not to know whether Girumuhatse was a killer, when I mentioned Oswald he said, "He was my godson," and "He was killed by one Jean Girumuhatse." Nyandwi said that Chantalle's father had met the same fate, but he disputed her claim that Girumuhatse had his own wife's parents killed. According to Nyandwi, Girumuhatse had merely tried to kill his wife's brother, Evariste.

I found Evariste a few days later. He said that his parents had been killed by "accomplices of Girumuhatse," and that he himself had fled during the attack. Later, he had sought refuge with his sister, Girumuhatse's wife. "The moment I arrived, Girumuhatse cried out and called others," he told me. "They took me, stripped me, and began to beat me with sticks, and they took me to the roadblock." He recalled that when he was caught "my sister began crying like a madwoman, saying, 'You can't kill my brother like that!' " Evariste said that Girumuhatse "tried to take me to the roadblock of my neighborhood, so I could be killed in my place," and that "I was totally nude, and they were leading me toward a mass grave to throw me in." But he had managed to flee into the night.

Evariste believed that Girumuhatse had been responsible for the deaths of more than seventy people. He hadn't seen Girumuhatse since his return, but he had seen Girumuhatse's wife and their son Emanuel—his sister and nephew—and he told me that both of them feared Girumuhatse and wanted him arrested. Yet Evariste, who is a Tutsi and a town counsellor, was afraid to denounce the man who had tried to kill him. "I'm sure that there could be death for my sister and her children," he explained, and he told me that since Girumuhatse's return his own nights were again filled with fear. "People can't say out loud that they want revenge," Evariste said. "But, truly, many people have the wish."

ONE morning in early December, I found the streets of Kigali lined with people carrying hoes and machetes. It was a day of public work; everywhere, vacant lots were being transformed into brickyards—a first step toward constructing homes for people displaced by the return. At one such site, I found General Kagame in a crowd of ragged laborers. He was spading mud into a wooden brick frame. "This is soldiers' work, too," he told me. A few feet away, a man was down on his knees, chopping straw with a big machete. He had just come back from Zaire, and he said he had been a bit astonished, after hearing Kagame demonized in the camps, to see him there. "But it's normal," he added, "because every authority who wants to work for the country must set the example for the people."

The speed with which the doctrines of genocide had been displaced by the order to live together was exhilarating, and it was also an eerie reminder that Rwanda's old balance of authority and compliance remained intact. The system was useful for the overwhelming demands of the moment: you put in a new message, and—presto!—revolutionary change. But wasn't it only a change of complexion? Shortly before I came across Kagame making bricks, I had told the story of Girumuhatse to Gerald Gahima, at the Justice Ministry. At first, he had been inclined to favor the man for confessing, but as the details piled up he became increasingly glum. "For values to change," Gahima said, "there has to be an acknowledgment of guilt, a genuine desire for atonement, a willingness to make amends, the humility to accept your mistakes and seek forgiveness. But everyone says it's not us, it's our brothers, our sisters. At the end of the day, no one has done wrong. So, in a situation where there has been such gross injustice and nobody is willing to seek forgiveness, how can values change?"

It was a good question, and I wanted to give Girumuhatse another chance to help answer it. He received Bosco and me in a tiny parlor, and this time his son Emanuel joined us. On my first visit, Emanuel had steered me away, saying that there were no other men around who had returned from Zaire, and later his uncle, Evariste, had told me that Emanuel wanted Girumuhatse arrested. I wondered if Emanuel knew what his uncle had said, and I was pleased when he sat in a position that placed him out of his father's line of sight but where I could watch him directly.

When I asked Girumuhatse about the young man called Oswald, whom many people said he had killed, Emanuel began to grin so widely that he had to suck in his lips and bite them to contain himself. All that Girumuhatse would say about Oswald was "He was killed during the war." Emanuel rolled his eyes, and when I asked by name about Chantalle's father he kept grinning. Chantalle's father was also killed, Girumuhatse said, and he would not elaborate.

Girumuhatse was suffering from a nasty cough, and he sat doubled forward over his knees on a low stool, staring unhappily at the floor. When he told me that he had commanded people from about fifty families during the killings, Emanuel let out a little snort. "Did you direct all of that?" he asked, in a mocking tone. "Just you?"

Finally, I asked Girumuhatse if it was true that he had tried to kill his wife's brother. Only then did I realize that Emanuel understood French, because his expressions lurched out of control. But Bosco refused to relay the question in front of Emanuel; Girumuhatse, he said, was shutting down with embarrassment. Not long afterward, Emanuel stepped outside, and Girumuhatse told me that he had tried to save his wife's brother, explaining, "I tried to take him to his neighborhood to protect him, so that he wouldn't be killed here before my eyes."

When I got up to leave, Girumuhatse walked outside with me. "I'm glad to have spoken," he said. "To tell the truth is normal and good." ♦

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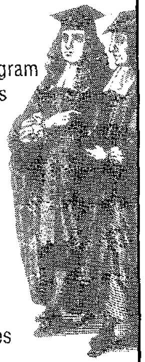

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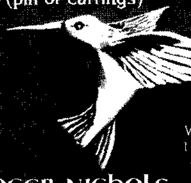

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ANNALS OF SHOW BUSINESS

I PLAYED THE APOLLO

What it takes to survive Harlem's legendary Amateur Night.

BY GEORGE PLIMPTON

ALMOST all the newspapers in their Ella Fitzgerald obituaries last June noted that the singer's career had started at the age of sixteen, when, for singing "The Object of My Affection," she won first prize—twenty-five dollars—while competing on Amateur Night at Harlem's Apollo Theatre. The Apollo's Amateur Night is a Wednesday-evening tradition that continues to this day.

Back in the sixties, I went up to 125th Street to Amateur Night quite often, not so much in the hope of being in on the discovery of a great talent as to enjoy being part of what was essentially a kind of "happening," and to admire those who were courageous enough to risk the most extreme forms of derision. One afternoon, I called the authorities there and asked if I could compete in the contest.

"Doing what?"

I said that I was an odd kind of reporter, a "participatory journalist," and wanted to perform a short piano piece of my own composition on Amateur Night in order to write about the experience. Somewhat puzzled, the Apollo's impresarios agreed.

The contestants, including Plimpton the pianist.

ANTHONY RUSSO

In the weeks before my scheduled appearance, I became a regular on Wednesday night, and I picked up quite a bit of lore. The traditions of Amateur Night at the Apollo are time-honored. First of all, emerging from stage left, the contestant touches the shellacked stump of a tree set on an Ionic column. "The Tree of Hope" it is called. The original tree—a chestnut—shaded the backstage alley between the Lafayette Theatre and Connie's Inn, on Seventh Avenue at 132nd Street. For years, it was a kind of Rialto for performers: they sat around its base and gossiped—in such numbers that when an agent was looking for an act it was just a question of dropping by the tree to see who was available. When it was cut down, in 1933, during the widening of Seventh Avenue, a piece was retrieved for the Apollo. Some contestants spend a lot of time at the tree, rubbing the smooth sheen of its surface as if spreading out the wrinkles in a bedsheet—on the chance that some vague osmotic relationship will link them with predecessors who have touched the Tree of Hope and gone on to become stars.

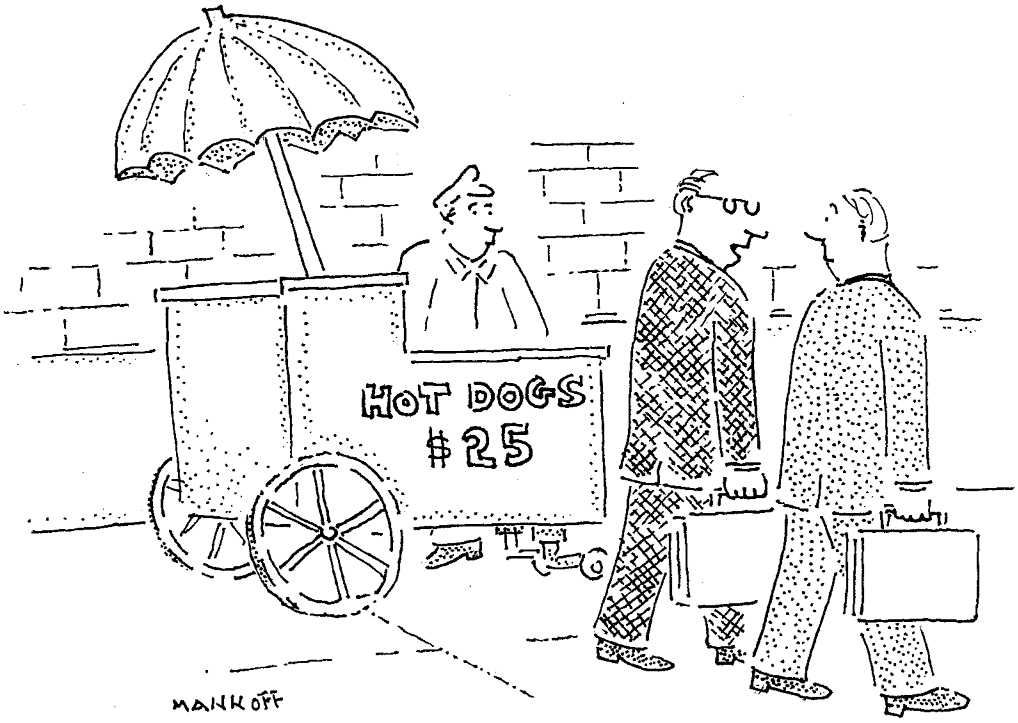
Next, after being introduced to the audience by the master of ceremonies, the contestant launches into a song, a dance, a juggling act—whatever. The success or failure of the effort depends upon the reaction of the audience, which functions as judge, very much as the crowds in Rome's Colosseum determined whether the gladiator would get a thumbs-up or a thumbs-down from the emperor's box. Sometimes the audience is divided in its opinion, and the contestant must strive to continue through a buffeting of boos and cheers until one side or the other prevails. If the contestant is successful, he or she appears in a lineup at the end of the show. Once again, the audience applauds, and the top four applause-getters move on to the monthly Show-Off. A contestant who continues to win will eventually reach the quarterly Top Dog Show-Off, which, as one would imagine, is attended by talent scouts. Stardom may not follow—although, besides Fitzgerald, the event has helped launch, among many others, Billie Holiday, Nina Simone, James Brown, the Ink Spots, the Coasters, Gladys Knight and the Pips, and the Jackson Five (Michael was ten at the time)—but, even when it doesn't, the contestant has been through quite an experience. The usual Broadway tryout pales by comparison.

If the contestant is unsuccessful, and the chorus of boos and whistles overwhelms the cheers, a fire siren goes off backstage, and a human representation of the "hook" appears, outlandishly dressed and often firing a pistol or brandishing a broom or a baseball bat; after capering about in a wild dance, he escorts the contestant backstage.

At the Apollo, the human hooks are referred to as Executioners. Over the years, there have been several Executioners. The first, back in the thirties, was Norman Miller—a short, foulmouthed, potbellied stagehand called Porto Rico. He came onstage in a number of guises: a farmer with a shotgun, an old woman with a broom, the Old Man of the Mountain, a hermit with a pitchfork, or—the noisiest of them—a grinning lunatic wearing a homemade suit of pots and pans. He was followed, after the war, by a man called the Great Adam. He was waiting in the wings the night I performed: a thin-shanked kid, who was, as I recall it, a bootblack at the time. Like his predecessor, he had fashioned a number of costumes for himself, among them a Batman outfit. One night as the Great Adam was prancing about the stage in this costume, a contestant hauled off and socked him. The Great Adam toppled over in a heap, flat out, and the stagehands had to rush on and remove the contestant, his feet kicking as they lifted him up and hurried him away. The night I performed, the Great Adam wore a pair of long johns and carried a small cap pistol.

He was succeeded by Howard (Sandman) Sims, who became one of the Apollo's famous characters. Before he became the Executioner, the Sandman sat up in a box overlooking a corner of the stage. As I remember him sitting there, he was outfitted in a shabby clown costume, over which he wore a string of Christmas-tree lights. He played—or, rather, *had*—a trombone, and when he disapproved of the performer on the stage below he would raise it to his lips and blow a swooping, sirenlike blast to signal to the Executioner that it was time for him to make an appearance. (In his early days, the Sandman would swing down on a rope from his box to the stage and do the job himself.) He was called Sandman because when he first came to New York, as a teen-ager, from North Carolina, he used to sprinkle a patch of sand on a sidewalk and dance across it, creating a scratching sound, like brushstrokes on a drum, and there was no one who could do it the way he did. Or, as he described it, "They ain't nobody who can whips they's feet like I can."

THE present Executioner is C. P.—for Crowd Pleaser—Lacey, who has been on the job since one night in 1986, when he substituted for Sandman Sims, who had taken a leave of absence to play a part in the film "Tap." Lacey, whose given name is actually Carlos Preston, was originally a street performer, setting a cloth hat out on the sidewalk and attracting an audience with gyrating dances in imitation of, among others, Elvis Presley, James Brown, Michael Jackson, and Tina Turner. (He doesn't like doing Turner, he says, because women's high heels hurt his feet.) These days, he is billed as America's Premier Comic Impressionist. The James Brown split is his specialty. Often, at the end of Wednesday evening, he sings "Please, Please, Please," complete with jumps and splits. "I learned the split the hard way," he told me not long ago. "After about killing myself, I bought the James Brown video and learned off that." He paused, then said solemnly, "I strongly



"I told you the Fed should have tightened."

recommend that you get the James Brown tape before you try the James Brown split."

"I'm very glad to hear this," I said, as if the James Brown split—actually a kind of half split preceded by a great leap—was the first thing I had in mind to do when I got home.

C.P., like his predecessors, has a number of Executioner costumes. When I met him, he was sporting three ties, an oversized coat, and a multicolored wig.

Cruel as these Executioners must seem to the contestants, it struck me that the hook is a compassionate procedure—at least, as utilized at the Apollo—in that the audience's attention is instantly removed from the hapless contestant and focussed on the Great Adam, say, lunatic in his big Dr. Dentons, as he capers around the stage, his little cap pistol popping. Indeed, the contestant can escape to the sanctuary of the wings in a storm of applause which, though it's not meant for him, is surely more comforting than a crestfallen exit to a chorus of catcalls.

The Executioner is not the only presence to reckon with on Amateur Night. Roaming the house there used to be a person known as the Geech, who, dressed in women's clothes, went up and down the aisles plaintively and loudly calling for someone named Richard: "Rich . . . *ard!*"

Another formidable personage is Eva Isaac (also known as Miss Apollo), who has a regular seat in the front row, which she has now occupied on Amateur Night for almost forty years. She is very quick to act as an orchestra-level Executioner, shooing off failed performers with violent hand motions. A great fan of Al Green, and also of Otis Redding and Sam Cooke, she is a harsh critic of any contestant who tries to imitate these famous singers, and it is considered wise to leave their work out of one's repertoire. Often, if she particularly likes an act—especially that of a male singer—she climbs onto the stage and does a somewhat tipsy dance around the contestant, now and then stroking him like a large pet. The fact that Eva is on the stage is of considerable comfort to performers, because as goes Eva so goes the house. On the other hand, to negotiate and reach the high notes of a finale, say, cannot be easy with Eva draped around one's person like a boa.

And then there is the audience itself. It packs the house—all fourteen hundred and seventy seats—on Amateur Night. It is raucous, enthusiastic, and keenly judgmental. Even the master of ceremonies' standard question to his audience—"Having a good time?"—gets a smattering of "No!"s. Traditionally, he reminds his listeners of their responsibilities ("If you think the contestants need a little woodshedding, let 'em know. Let 'em know if tonight is not their night"), and his listeners certainly take the reminder to heart. The quickest "hook" I've heard of was administered to a white man who came onstage to sing "Pardon My Southern Accent" and was booed off before he was able to get out a single note. Another quick decision involved an enormously fat man, well over four hundred pounds, who walked briskly across the stage and then stopped abruptly, his flesh quivering like a sharply struck hillock of Jell-O. That was all he did, and it didn't go over well with the people out front: they immediately called for the Executioner.

And yet the audience can be compassionate. One story I treasure is about an amateur who was singing so badly that, before the Executioner could get to him, a stagehand flipped the switch controlling the microphone, sending it down into a recess below the stage. As it slowly descended, the singer followed it, until finally he was on his knees, still singing, with his head just off the floor. The audience, admiring his determination, quieted down and then began cheering as the microphone began its rise; the singer got up off his knees, and eventually stood upright, his rendition still full of dreadful wrong notes but now delivered to a standing ovation.

It was into this cauldron that I ventured. At home, I had been spending a couple of hours a day at the piano. I am not very serious about the piano. I know only three or four pieces—among them "Tea for Two" and "Deep Purple"—but I enjoy improvising, and the result is music that one of my friends has described as sounding like the background music on the soap opera "The Edge of Night."

The Wednesday I was to perform, I left a cocktail party and arrived at the Apollo in a dark business suit and a sombre tie. The night's program was devoted almost entirely to rock-and-roll acts. We gathered in what was then called the Dungeon—a basement room containing a dozen broken-down theatre seats, their stuffing showing, a table, a number of music stands, and, above a door, a mysterious red-lettered cardboard sign that read "All Those Who Enter Here," the rest of it torn away. Through this dank room moved a shifting, restless crowd of would-be performers, self-absorbed, mute, and utterly miserable. All my fellow-contestants were black. One of them was a young girl—around ten, I would guess—wearing tap-dancing shoes that clickety-clicked as she walked nervously among us. I suppose if anyone had looked at me, in my business suit and tie, they might have assumed that I was an important talent scout. There were no introductions.

The master of ceremonies at that time was Honi Coles: a slim, elegant dancer, he was a partner in the famous tap-dancing team of Coles & Atkins. Listening at the bottom of a curved iron staircase leading to the stage level, we could hear him joshing with the crowd. The Great Adam walked through the Dungeon in his union-suit outfit. We all stared at him.

I stood in the wings to watch the act immediately preceding mine. The contestant was playing an old-fashioned watering can. I had only a glimpse of how he was playing the thing—blowing across the mouth of the spout and, with his free hand, lifting its lid and setting it down again, as if it were a jazz drummer's high-hat cymbal. I wish I could remember the sound he produced; I suppose it was something rather like the hoot you get when you blow across the neck of a large bottle. In any case, the audience took umbrage and called for the Great Adam to move him out of sight. I recall thinking that anyone who could get *any* sound out of a watering can, much less a vaguely recognizable tune, should be allowed to hang in there, if only for the novelty. Instead, with the Great Adam behind him, he came off the stage murmuring, and cradling his curious instrument to his chest as if he were carrying a Stradivarius.

It was my turn. I was firmly convinced that I would last only a few minutes. The first whistles would start, and, not long afterward, the bray from the Sandman, in his box, would bring out the Great Adam to escort me back into the wings. I told the Great Adam as much: "It won't be long."

I stepped out onto the stage. I touched the Tree of Hope.

Honi Coles was waiting to meet me. He asked my name and where I lived. It helps if you come from Manhattan (as I do), because most of the audience comes from Harlem. There was a certain amount of encouraging clapping.

"What are you going to play?" Coles asked.

I said, "I'm going to play the piano."

His eyebrows rose slightly. He spoke with studied affectation: "And what is the name of the musical composition with which you are intending to entertain us, if I may ask?"

The fact is that I had not named the work. It tended to change every time I played it, as if I were poking at a piece of quicksilver.

"I guess it's Opus No. 1," I said.

"Opus No. 1," he announced to the audience.

I walked over to the piano. I remember how foreign the keyboard looked, and how consciously I had to figure out where to arrange my fingers for the opening chords.

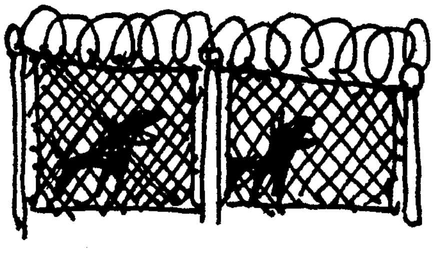
I began. Over the vapid sounds of Opus No. 1, I could hear the audience beginning to make up its mind—first a few whistles, which usually precede the booing. I was conscious of the Sandman up behind me, leaning over the railing of his box, and I suppose I must have hunched my shoulders slightly, cringing, waiting for the blat of his trombone. But nothing. A few handclaps. No reaction from Miss Apollo, Eva—probably because what I was playing bore very little resemblance to Al Green, Otis Redding, or Sam Cooke.

I began to realize that I had a chance—a slight chance—of getting through the piece.

So I finished Opus No. 1. I caught a glimpse of the Great Adam standing in the wings. He grinned and gave me a thumbs-up sign. I stood and bowed—rather awkwardly, as if someone were pushing me in the back.

In the lineup at the end of the show, my performance won second prize. The young tap dancer, who had sung "Dancing Shoes" as she clickety-clicked across the stage, won first prize. Jack Schiffman—the son of Frank Schiffman, who took over the Apollo with a partner, in 1935—writes in his book "Uptown: The Story of Harlem's Apollo Theatre," that I "treated the startled audience to a tasteful rendition of Debussy's 'Clair de Lune,' " and that I came in third. He could be right; over the years I seem to have moved it up a notch.

THE Apollo has been through difficult times. In the early nineteen-fifties, the management presented thirty shows a week, including Amateur Night on Wednesday and a midnight performance on Saturday. But in the sixties the enormous appeal of rock concerts drew audiences away to larger halls. In 1966, when the Harlem riots erupted, with fires and destruction, angry crowds respected the Apollo and left it untouched, but in January of 1976, because of financial difficulties, the Apollo, and, with it, Amateur Night, closed. A month earlier, during a Smokey Robinson concert, a shootout had occurred in which a man was killed and two people were wounded, and public confidence in the family atmosphere of the Apollo diminished. It reopened soon afterward as a theatre showing mostly monster and B movies. Only occasionally were concerts booked. In 1981, the theatre went into bankruptcy. Eventually, the Inner City Broadcasting Corporation, led by the former Manhattan borough president Percy Sutton, bought the Apollo and spent twenty million dollars on restoring it as an entertainment complex, including sound studios and video-production facilities. They were seldom used. In June of 1983, the Apollo was granted landmark status, and on Christmas Eve of that year Amateur Night was started up again in the main theatre. Wednesday night was invariably sold out, but in 1992, because of financial strain, the investors transferred ownership to a nonprofit organization, the Apollo Theatre Foundation. The Sutton interests retained a television program they had started, "Showtime at the Apollo," which still appears these days in eighty or so markets around the country (following "Saturday Night Live" in New York). In it Sandman Sims is on hand as the Executioner, rushing out during the Amateur Night part of the show.



Prompted by the mention of Amateur Night in the Ella Fitzgerald obituaries, I visited the Apollo late one Wednesday afternoon a few weeks after her death. I had forgotten what an admirable theatre it is—surely one of New York City's great public places, with its long red-carpeted vestibule below a string of chandeliers, its Wall of Fame display of black stars who have performed on its stage, and then the theatre itself, with its graceful lines and its ornate proscenium.

I was taken in hand by Grace Blake, the executive director of the Apollo Theatre Foundation, who had been on the job for about nine months, after almost twenty-five years in the film industry. She explained that the goals of the foundation—besides continuing the Amateur Night tradition—were to revitalize the Apollo as a first-rate performing-arts center and to promote the musical heritage of African-Americans through live performances, recordings, television, and film. "The facilities here—the soundstage and the recording studios built by the Sutton group—are a perfect setup for such a program. It's a shame that up until now the complex has hardly ever been used," she said. I asked if whites had begun to come back to the Amateur Night performances. "Not New Yorkers," she said. "We get many Japanese and a few Germans. What a shame." She leaned back in her chair and exclaimed, "Oh, I'd like to invite the whole white world to come to the Apollo!" Born in Venezuela and brought up in Trinidad, Blake has a Caribbean lilt to her voice, which made the appeal all the more inviting.

I asked if the Japanese ever performed.

"Oh, yes," she said. She mentioned the Harmonica Boy, a young Japanese kid, not much older than six, who had played the blues. "The Japanese love plain old theatrical black music—blues, jazz," she explained. "One night, a Japanese singer sang 'Purple Rain,' by Prince. He couldn't speak English, but he'd learned all the words. Very strange accent. At the end, trying to sound like a rap artist, the young man riffed a bunch of four-letter swearwords, though it was clear he had no idea what he was saying."

I stayed around that evening. At about seven o'clock, the lobby began to fill: there were a lot of bare midriffs, and large gold earrings seemed to be the jewelry of choice. Japanese families lined up to have their pictures taken in front of the Wall of Fame.

Ms. Blake introduced me to a Japanese man named Tommy Tomita. He turned out to be largely responsible for the disproportionate number of his countrymen who come to the Apollo every Wednesday night. He told me that he had arrived in the United States about ten years before, with his wife, Miki Sakaguchi, who possessed a lovely singing voice. Enchanted by the gospel choirs she heard in Harlem, she had rather nervously put together a repertoire to compete on Amateur Night. She has won nine prizes, Tomita told me. He eventually wrote a guidebook about Harlem, and it became a great success in Tokyo—selling more than two hundred thousand copies a year—and that is why the Apollo ranks right up there with the Empire State Building and the Statue of Liberty on Japanese itineraries. The Japanese theatregoers arrive in yellow buses and sit together in a large block of seats on the right-hand side of the orchestra. If they approve of the performer, they shout "Hai! Hai!" Disapproval brings out a chorus of what sounded to my uneducated ear like "Boorrr! Boorr!"

I STOOD at the back of the house with Ms. Blake. The master of ceremonies checked out where the audience was from. "Let's hear it from the brothers and sisters from Manhattan," he began, and he moved on to the Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn, and finally to Staten Island, Long Island, and—to get a laugh—Rikers Island. He asked, "Minnesota?" One clap. And then "Japan?" A roar: "Hai! Hai!"

After everything had quieted down, we had a moment of silence in memory of Ella Fitzgerald, and it was followed by a rendition of her first hit, "A-Tisket, A-Tasket," by the four members of the house band, Ray Chew and the Crew.

The quality of the amateur performers was higher than I had expected. Indeed, Crowd Pleaser Lacey came out only once—to remove a rapper who was dressed in a cardiganlike sweater reaching below his knees and a cap turned backward. At the whine of the siren, Lacey appeared on a crutch, wearing his multicolored wig and three ties.

Next, a young woman, obviously nervous, struggled her way through "Amazing Grace."

I said to Ms. Blake that I was surprised the Executioner hadn't come for her.

"Well, you can't boo God or Jesus," she explained. "So the gospel singers most likely survive." A song that rarely gets hooted down, she said, however badly it is rendered, is "Jesus on the Main Line"—about His phone line, which is never busy—and she recalled one Amateur Gospel Night, when a rapper came onstage, rapped about God, and won first prize. "I was shocked," she said.

At the end of each act, the amateur made a rather clumsy bow—a head bob and a slight hitch of the body. Bowing was not something the contestants had worked on. I remembered my own awkward attempt.

At one point, a young man dressed in white flannels and a V-neck sweater touched the Tree of Hope and, after being introduced, launched into the Stevie Wonder song "Lately." I thought his Bill Tilden-like outfit would doom him, but his voice, strong and confident, not only won over the audience but brought Eva, Miss Apollo, out of her seat, up over the footlights, and onto the stage. He struggled both with her and with the end of "Lately," and managed to get out a tremulous final note as, in a delirium of affection, she flung an arm around his throat.

I was enjoying myself. I had noticed immediately how friendly the place had become. Two or three strangers came up to ask if I was having a good time. I said, "Oh, yes." I pointed to the stage and said I had been up there once.

"You're foolin'."

"I won second or third prize," I said. "I can't really remember which." ◆

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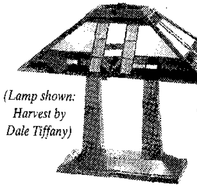
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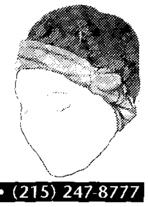
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LIFE AND LETTERS

CITIZEN KAY

The most imposing woman in journalism delivers an unexpectedly confessional autobiography.

BY DAVID REMNICK

In my boyhood as a reporter, I nearly killed the matriarch of the liberal-media conspiracy. This was in 1988, and I had recently been assigned to the Washington *Post's* bureau in Moscow. In an otherwise blissful spring of journalistic overload, a time when the merest cough in the Kremlin merited front-page attention, it came about that the *Post* and its sister publication, *Newsweek*, were being awarded a plum: an interview with the General Secretary of the Communist Party. Katharine Graham, the general secretary of the Washington Post Company, and a planeload of senior editors would soon arrive in town to conduct it.

This was not entirely to the good. Great risk was involved, or so one heard. Mrs. Graham—one always referred to her as Mrs. Graham, even in private and at great distances—did not travel in the style of the British Raj, but she was not arriving on a Eurailpass, either. Attention would have to be paid. The cost of failure was incalculable. The legends of correspondents and their varying abilities to cope with a royal visit were countless. There was the Latin-American correspondent for the *Post*, who wandered the continent for weeks in advance, arranging hotel suites, hairdressers, and interviews with heads of state from Caracas to Tierra del Fuego. He was quite a success. But there was also a certain Africa-based correspondent who carved his own career coffin by arranging for a balloon safari over the Masai Mara at dawn; just as the sun was glinting off the savanna and the balloon was rising above a herd of grazing giraffes, Mrs. Graham is said to have turned to the correspondent and announced, with a profane burr, "You know, I didn't travel all the way here to be a fucking tourist." It is said that the correspondent ended up as a recipe checker in the food section. Perhaps it was true. We in Moscow had neither the time nor the luxury that would allow us to confirm these legends. One did not want to spend the remainder of one's career taste-testing lima beans.

As is true of any royal visit, there were many logistical problems to be worked out. As the junior man in the bureau, I was given the task of finding the hairdresser. I would not insist that Moscow was short on luxury in those days except to note that I did not so much find a hairdresser as create one. At one of the embassies, I found a young woman who was said to own a blow-dryer and a brush. I rang her up and explained the situation. Gravely, as if we were negotiating the Treaty of Ghent, I gave her an annotated copy of *Vogue*, a mug shot of Mrs. Graham, and a hundred dollars.

"You're on," she said.

This was my most important contribution to the interview with the General Secretary of the Communist Party. On the appointed day, I put on my good blue suit, fired up the office Volvo, and proudly drove the hairdresser to Mrs. Graham's suite at the National Hotel. Apparently, the interview went well. It was featured, with a photograph, in the next day's edition of *Pravda*. Mrs. Graham looked quite handsome, I thought. A nice full head of hair, and well combed. I felt close to history.

A few days later, I was assigned to show her and her close friend Meg Greenfield, the *Post's* editorial-page editor, around the city that was then known as Leningrad. Following the lead of my successful colleague the Latin-American correspondent, I tried to schedule every minute of the two days allotted me. The first night's entertainment was an easy choice: the Kirov Ballet. For the second, I went with the upbeat, down-market option: the circus. Mrs. Graham seemed not to mind the nasty benches or the almost very funny clowns. She was in a good mood. The interview had been heady stuff. The General Secretary had "revealed" his plans for a joint United States–Soviet space mission to Mars, and we led the paper with that world beat. At one point, Mrs. Graham asked for ice cream. I got it for her. But then, at intermission, she seemed to tire. As enormous cages and nets were being assembled in the circus ring, she declared, "I think it's time to go."

I panicked. My limousine driver had been given strict instructions—and a sizable bribe—to wait outside in case of emergency. This being Russia, however, I could not bet with any confidence against the possibility that he was at this very moment converting his cash into a refreshing liquidity at some local *boîte*. "Sure, we can go," I ventured, "but the second act has some really great animals." I began to describe Misha the Bear, who wore skates on his hind paws and played ice hockey.

Mrs. Graham blinked and said, "I think it's time to go."

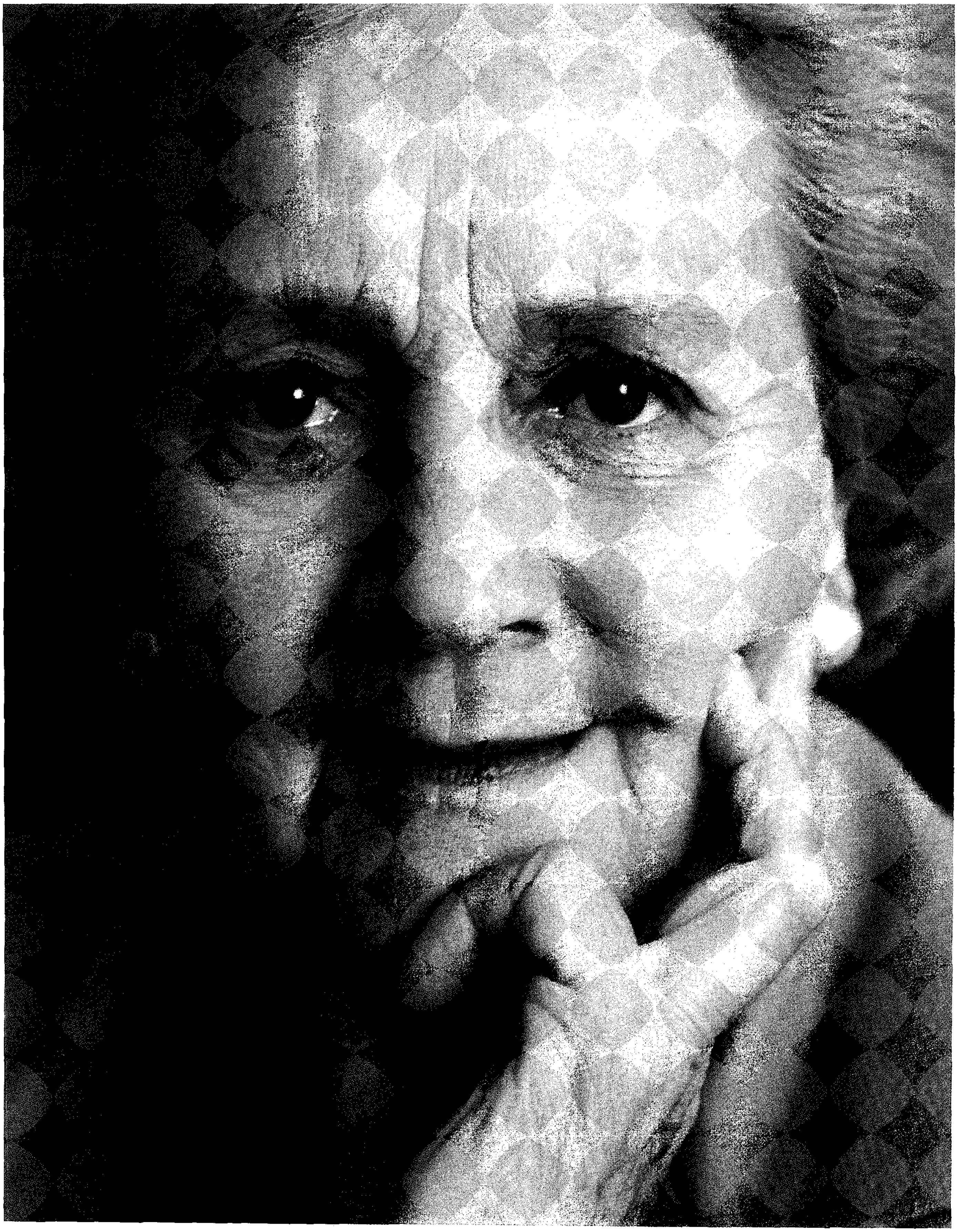
As I began to lead the way down the steps, a bus-size babushka—the usher—fixed me with a hard look and said, "*Nel'zya.*" Impossible. You can't go.

It is not usually advisable, or possible, to argue with a Soviet bus, but my priorities were clear. I had visions of that fellow in the balloon, high above the plain, floating into journalistic obscurity, so I did what one cannot ordinarily do with a babushka. I insisted. Then I lied. I told her that this woman, this very *important* woman, was gravely ill and in need of immediate medical attention. The babushka melted.

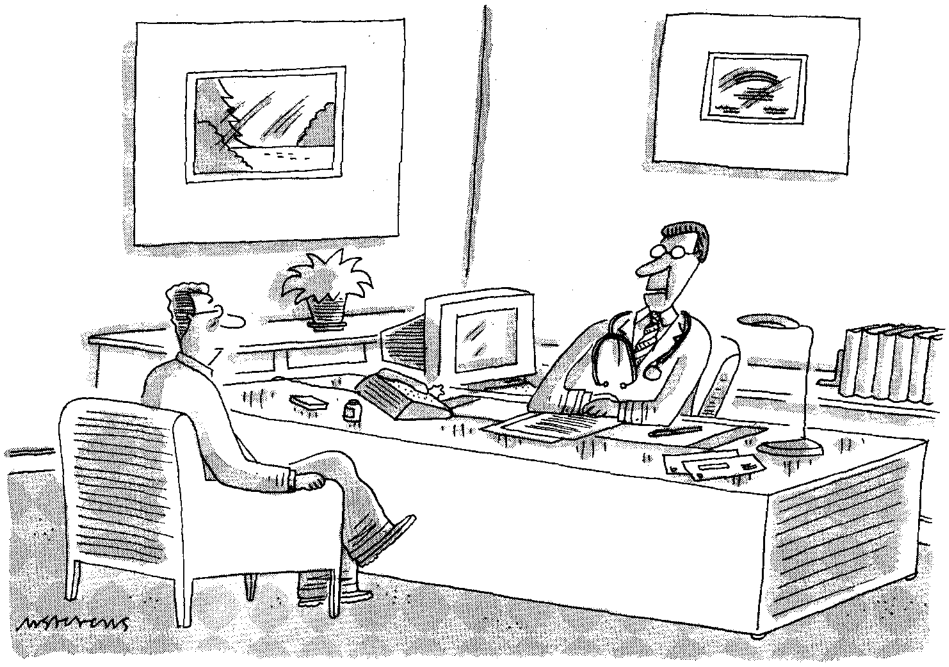
"But hurry," she said. All around was the loud mewing of big cats and small children.

With me in the lead, the three of us walked down a ramp and past what appeared to be a coffin-size box with open slats. I passed the box without incident. So did Meg Greenfield. Then Mrs. Graham started past it. Suddenly, an enormous claw lunged out of the box and toward the innocent calf of the chairman of the Washington Post Company.

To this day, I cannot say what the



All the familiar episodes of the Washington Post's history are in Katharine Graham's book, but more interesting is her description of the muggy intimacy of the world of Washington and the way she learned to live her life there. Photograph by Arnold Newman.



"Your condition is serious, Mr. Reynolds, but fortunately I recently scored some excellent weed that should alleviate your symptoms."

• •

beast was—a leopard, a cougar, a jaguar—but I can still see its talons not an inch from the hose and flesh of my proprietor. She, too, saw it, felt its heat, and began running for the exit. The car, at least, was waiting and its driver was sober. But what of it? I would be recalled to the home office. I would be lucky to cover high-school softball in Prince William County.

But then Mrs. Graham was laughing. She was flushed, delighted. "My God!" she said, covering her pearls with the tips of her fingers. "That was some circus! I almost rather died!"

NEEDLESS to say, for years I regaled all who would listen with my Katharine Graham story. The story, of course, revealed nothing of Mrs. Graham. During that Leningrad trip, the only moment that hinted at something mysterious and human came when we were in a map room at the Hermitage Museum. Mrs. Graham spotted a map of the Aegean and Black Seas and began to talk about a cruise she had taken in the summer of 1963, not long after her husband died. The subject of the cruise seemed to cause her, so many years later, intense pain—pain beyond the loss of her husband. "I never should have gone," she said. And then nothing more. It was a fleeting, mystifying moment, but a very real one. There was, of course, no way to press the point.

For nearly all *Post* reporters and editors, even those few who ventured to call her Kay, she was the woman who signed our checks, the Queen Mother, a cartoon figure with a lockjaw voice that sounded, to us, like money. But those who worked in the *Post's* newsroom knew one infinitely reassuring fact about Mrs. Graham: that at the most important moments of her professional life she did the right thing. She went ahead with the publication of the Pentagon Papers, and she backed her reporters and editors during Watergate, when the Post Company's survival was under threat and the paper was all alone in pursuing the story. In doing so, she and her editor, Ben Bradlee, dragged the *Post* out of the sea of the ordinary and made it great, made it a rival of the New York *Times*. But even this was hard to understand. How could a woman reared in such exquisite privilege—one whose circle of friends, among them Robert McNamara and Henry Kissinger, Lyndon Johnson and Nancy Reagan, rarely widened beyond the most powerful élites of Washington and New York—take such risks?

Her story was not easy to figure out. When a young woman named Deborah Davis published a biography in 1979 called "Katharine the Great," Mrs. Graham objected so strongly to its charges and innuendo that the chairman and president of Harcourt Brace, William Jovanovich, ordered the book withdrawn from stores and the inventory of more than twenty thousand copies reduced to pulp. "I cannot tell you how pained I am by the circumstances which have caused you, quite unnecessarily, distress and concern," Jovanovich wrote in a cowering letter to Mrs. Graham. "If we should ever meet again, I would like to tell you some of my thoughts on what I have come to recognize as a kind of 'editorial blackmail,' in which persons say that if you reject a work . . . you are repressing free expression and limiting the truth."

Few suggested that "Katharine the Great" was a first-rate book, or even a solid one—it was flatly written and salted with highly suspect, even paranoid, material—but one had to wonder if Mr. Jovanovich would have done the same for anyone else. There are plenty of lousy biographies in this world, and they languish on musty shelves, ignored—but whole. Jovanovich caved, then pulped. Mrs. Graham, for her part, wrote back to him, "I was full of admiration anyway for what you did and the way you did it." In the end, Davis sued her publisher for libel and breach of contract in 1982 and received a hundred-thousand-dollar settlement. The book has been republished twice by small presses.

Until now, Katharine Graham, considering her influence, has been almost invisible. She hardly exists in Woodward and Bernstein's books, and she is portrayed in cardboard terms almost everywhere else. An exception is David Halberstam's 1979 book, "The Powers That Be," which provides a vivid group portrait of the men and women behind the *Post*, CBS, *Time*, and the Los Angeles *Times*.

All that has changed now, with the publication of Katharine Graham's own "Personal History" (Knopf; $30). This is a surprising piece of work on every level. As far as I know, Katharine Graham had not written much since her early days on the *Post*, when she wrote a magazine column and was the anonymous author of such editorials as "On Being a Horse," "Mixed Drinks," and "Spotted Fever." And yet I don't know of a more complex autobiography by an American business figure, certainly not one that allows itself such moments of weakness, embarrassment, and pain. There is plenty of material in "Personal History" to satisfy the most obvious expectations—all the familiar episodes of the *Post's* history are replayed, and famous faces bob into sight as if in a capital version of "Grand Hotel"—but more interesting is the degree to which this memoir is a description of the muggy intimacy of the world of Washington and the way one powerful woman learned to live her life there.

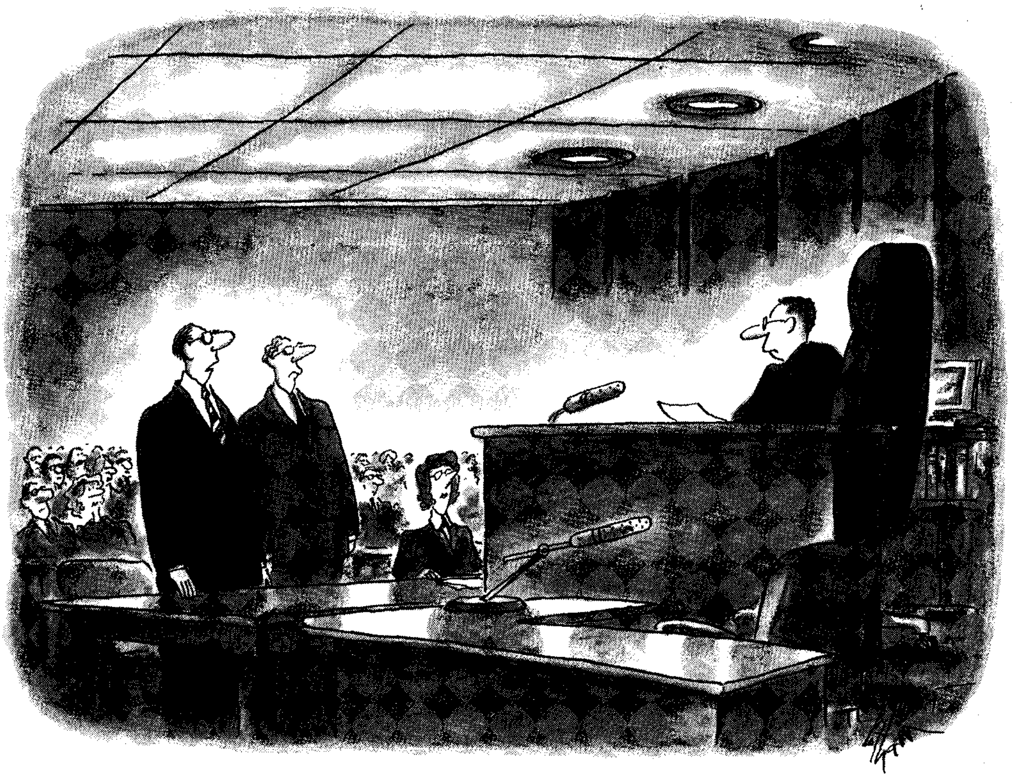
For all its glamour and great personages, "Personal History" is a litany of humiliations, incidents in which the memoirist faults herself for lack of judgment, of independence, or of strength. For example, what I could not have known at the Hermitage is that after the suicide of her husband, on August 3, 1963, and the funeral, Mrs. Graham sent her eldest son, Donald, back to his interneship at the *Times*, sent her two younger sons, Bill and Steve, back to summer camp, and promptly flew off to Europe to meet her eldest child—her daughter, Lally—and a group of very O.K. friends for the Aegean cruise.

"That decision may have been right for me," she writes, "but it was so wrong for Bill and Steve and even for Don—so wrong that I wonder how I could have made it. . . . This is, for me, the most painful thing to look back on. It's hard to remake decisions and even harder to rethink nondecisions. Sometimes you don't really decide, you just move forward, and that is what I did—moved forward blindly and mindlessly into a new and unknown life. . . . In effect [Bill and Steve] lost both parents at once. Up to that time I had been a fairly present mother, attending school functions, driving teams to sports events, trying to be back in the afternoons when the kids got back from school. All that was mostly over now, though I tried to be with them as much as possible." This is not the sort of moment one could hope to find in the self-examination of Andrew Carnegie or Colonel McCormick, much less of Bill Gates or Rupert Murdoch.

GRAHAM'S insecurity as a woman, as a publisher, and as a parent has clear and painful origins. So does her imperious carriage. Her beginnings were at once privileged and starved. Even considering the style of rich American families in the early part of the century, her parents, Eugene and Agnes Meyer, seem to have exceeded the norm for emotional reticence. Eugene Meyer was a Jew who might have preferred not to be. "Money, my father's being Jewish, and sex" were taboo subjects at home. Katharine, born in New York in 1917, was baptized when she was ten to satisfy the Lutheran side of the family; to satisfy the demands of class, the Meyers had their own pew at St. John's Episcopal Church, on Lafayette Square—"the president's church." (Katharine did not seem to realize she was part Jewish until she was at Vassar.) Meyer began his financial career by investing six hundred dollars his father had given him for not smoking until he was twenty-one. By 1906, Meyer had made several million dollars by investing in securities; by 1915, he was worth between forty and sixty million. He was intent, however, on making his mark in public life as well as on the stock exchange. He came to Washington in 1917 as a dollar-a-year man for the Wilson Administration; and, while he was holding a variety of positions on the War Industries Board, the Farm Loan Board, and the Federal Reserve Board, the Meyers became friendly with Bernard Baruch, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Charles Evans Hughes. It was not long before he began looking around town to buy a newspaper.

Katharine's mother, Agnes Meyer, was descended from Lutheran ministers. She was a woman of inchoate ambition—an ambition that took the shape mainly of ambitious friendships and painfully comic intellectual pretensions. She pursued hard the company of the well known. When she travelled to Paris, she quite naturally took up with Brancusi and Rodin and Stein and Satie; she took fencing lessons with Mme. Curie. Later, she developed an infatuation with the work of Thomas Mann and seems to have made endless demands on the author's time and patience. Mann was once asked if Agnes was German. He replied, "Oh, yes, very. She is a Valkyrian type with something else—a mixture of Valkyrie and Juno."

Agnes's ambitions were fuelled by resentment of her station as a wife and mother. (The Meyers had five children, of whom Katharine was the fourth.) "She had not thought about what marriage entailed in the way of relationships to spouse and children," Graham writes. "I'm not sure she was ever really able to. Insofar as she was capable of love, I think she loved my father and us, but she was highly complex, and at times deeply unhappy." In her own memoir, Agnes wrote of rebelling against the responsibilities of marriage; she behaved, she said,



"Not guilty, Your Honor, and thank you for asking."

"as if the whole world were in a conspiracy to flatten out my personality and cast me into a universal mold called 'woman.' "

Katharine saw her parents only sparingly. Agnes was perennially engaged in writing books-in-progress. When she spoke to her daughter, it was often in the barbed rhythm of insult. Eugene served Agnes breakfast in bed every morning; he ate at the bedside table. Sometimes Katharine glimpsed her parents as they were dressing to go out, or as Agnes was being massaged and manicured in preparation for the evening's entertainment. Even when Katharine was the publisher of the *Post*, David Halberstam writes in "The Powers That Be," she felt as if she were in her mother's shadow. She once took the time to introduce her friend the architect I. M. Pei to Agnes. Pei was talking, and Katharine said, "I didn't know that."

"What's surprising about that?" Agnes said. "You've never known anything."

"I can't say I think Mother genuinely loved us," she writes. "Toward the end of her life, I was a success in her eyes, and perhaps that is what she loved. Yet, with all her complexity, I felt closer throughout my early childhood to my mother than to the very distant and rather difficult figure of my father." It was a loyal nanny, Powelly, who "supplied the hugs, the comforting, the feeling of human contact, even the love that my mother did not."

Katharine, by her own account and in the accounts of others, was a tall and awkward girl with a "manly stride," but she was also intelligent, and she absorbed the lessons of her social class well. She attended the Madeira School, in McLean, Virginia, one of the few girls' schools intent on training young women for a career. The founder, Lucy Madeira Wing, believed that God was a woman and tried to mold the girls into "Shavian Fabians," an army wielding its noblesse oblige.

At Vassar and at the University of Chicago, Katherine took an interest in left-wing politics, which were very much in the air, but always her sense and her sense of breeding prevented her from taking what seemed like extreme steps. She rebuffed Norman O. Brown's invitation to join the Communist Party. In England, she lunched with Harold Laski, but then went off to Salzburg to meet her mother, who "treated us to the Hotel Bristol and tickets to the music festival there." While a friend went on to visit the socialist experiment in Moscow, Katharine, on the stern advice of her father, did not. She supported Roosevelt, but her political values were essentially conservative and well within the boundaries of the American upper classes.

Despite Katharine's fear of living out her life alone and unaccomplished, she soon met one of the brightest young men in her Washington circle—Philip Graham, a protégé and clerk of Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter. Graham was from a Florida family whose financial prospects, while far from dire, were a matter of occasional drama. Graham's father had had trouble coming up with the funds to send him to Harvard Law, but managed to do so. Phil stunned Katharine by proposing marriage to her almost instantly, and he followed up the proposal with an insistence that they set out for Florida and a life without family money. His anxiety as a son-in-law was in place before the wedding vows.

From the start, Katharine was dazzled by her husband's intelligence and wit, his ability to light up a room: "He began to liberate me from my family and from the myths they had propagated." But she was resentful as well. For all his seeming irreverence and liberality, Phil Graham was no less domineering than any other husband of his day:

> Always, it was he who decided and I who responded. From the earliest days of our relationship, for instance, I thought that we had friends because of him and were invited because of him. It wasn't until years later that I looked at the downside of all this and realized that, perversely, I had

"What's the purpose of this loan? Fun."

> seemed to enjoy the role of doormat wife. For whatever reason, I liked to be dominated and to be the implementer. But although I was thoroughly fascinated and charmed by Phil, I was also slightly resentful, when I thought about it, at feeling such complete dependence on another person. . . .
>
> I didn't think much about it at the time, but this was the beginning of a pattern that I can see now was quite unhealthy. I was expected to perform all the pulling and hauling; Phil gave directions and put the fun in my life and the children's. Gradually, I became the drudge and, what's more, accepted my role as a kind of second-class citizen. I think this definition of roles deepened as time went on and I became increasingly unsure of myself.

Despite Phil's constant self-flagellation about being the son-in-law of a rich and powerful clan, he did not shy from the advantages for long. Eugene Meyer had bought the Washington *Post* at auction for eight hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars in 1933, and in 1946 he made Phil its publisher. The Grahams ran their rather expensive household out of Katharine's trust fund; meanwhile, Meyer gave Phil nearly three times as many shares of *Post* stock as he gave his daughter. "Phil received the larger share of the stock because, as Dad explained to me, no man should be in the position of working for his wife. Curiously, I not only concurred but was in complete accord with this idea."

TO get a sense of how momentous were Katharine Graham's two decisions in the nineteen-seventies—on the Pentagon Papers and Watergate—it is crucial to understand just how poorly she had been prepared for such decisions by her family, her legendary husband, and the atmosphere in which she had always lived. These days, the *Post* is usually thought of as the second-best paper in the country, after the *Times*—or, if not the second-best, then at least tied for that honor with the *Wall Street Journal* and, stretching some, the Los Angeles *Times*. Under Phil Graham, the *Post* had a well-respected editorial page and mediocrity nearly everywhere else; it was not even the best paper in the city. Phil's greatest successes were in business: buying and absorbing the *Times-Herald* in 1954, purchasing *Newsweek* (for a song) in 1961, and making inroads against the dominant paper in town, the *Evening Star* (which folded in 1981).

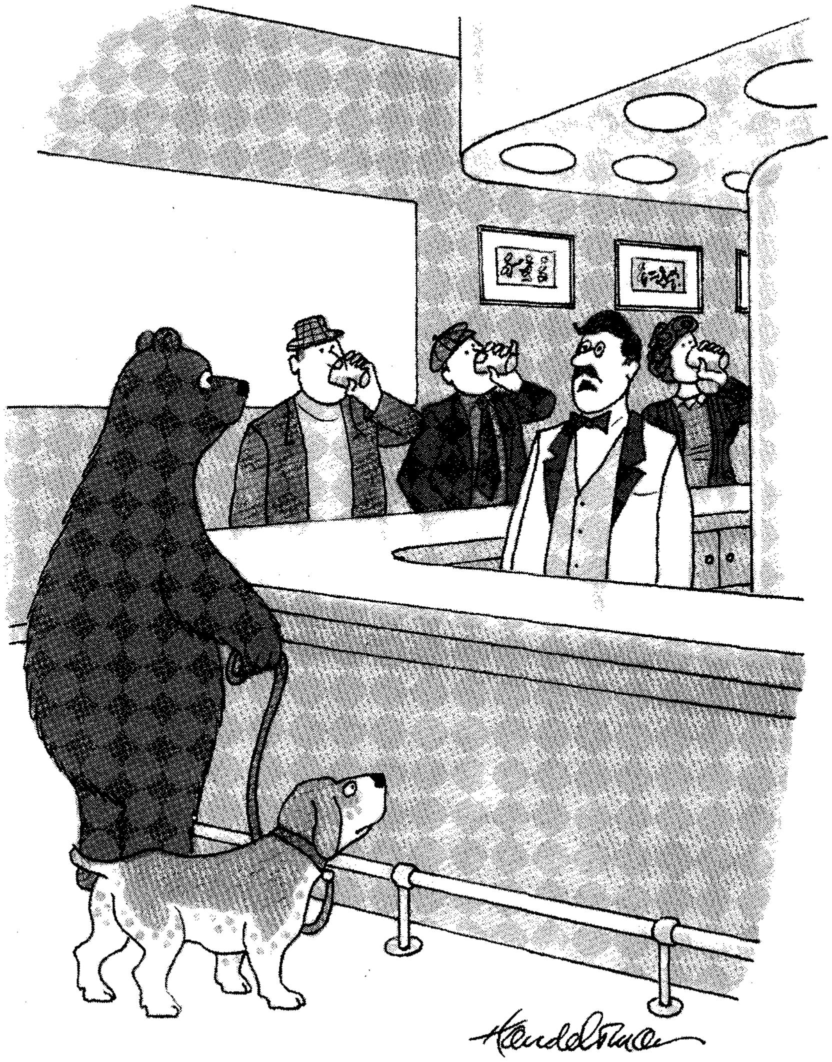
"What do we have to do to get some more crayons over here?"

• •

It is hard to remember now just how far in front the *Times* was after the Second World War. Even before Adolph Ochs bought the paper, in 1896, the *Times* had earned its record for rigor when it went after Boss Tweed. Under Ochs, the *Times* institutionalized the notion of nonpartisan, objective reporting. As a way to solidify this code, Ochs developed the idea of a "paper of record."

Under Philip Graham, the *Post* had no prayer of even pretending to match the standards of the country's best paper. He was simply not interested in the *Times* ideal so much as he was in making the *Post* a player in Washington and, perhaps more, in being a player himself. The *Post* was his instrument, his means of being listened to. In the summer of 1949, there were race riots in Washington over the integration of a city swimming pool. The paper sent out a young reporter named Ben Bradlee to cover what was happening, but Bradlee could barely find his story in the paper: it was buried deep inside, and nearly all mention of race and violence had been excised. Bradlee was incensed, and said so in terms both loud and profane. Graham heard him. "That's enough, Buster," he said, and he dragged Bradlee into a meeting with two officials from the Department of the Interior and with Clark Clifford, from the Truman White House. Graham instructed Bradlee to recount what he had seen and heard, and after he had done so the publisher and the three officials worked out a deal: as long as all the city pools were shut down for the time being and would be integrated the following year, the paper would print nothing more of what had happened.

Which is precisely the wrong way to conduct business as the publisher of a newspaper. But that is the way Phil Graham wanted it. And he wanted many things. He wanted Estes Kefauver to head an anticrime commission and told him so, repeatedly, until Kefauver did it. In later years, he wanted to mold the career of his friend Senator Lyndon Johnson. While publisher of the *Post*, he grew so close to L.B.J. that he wrote speeches for him and advised him on civil rights and key appointments; he even had power of attorney for Johnson and went out and found him a house to buy. At dinner at Joseph Alsop's one night early in 1961, Graham continually offered political advice to the new President, John Kennedy. "Phil," Kennedy said, "when you get elected dogcatcher I will listen to you on politics." But in fact Kennedy had listened to him. Without Graham working as a go-between at the 1960 Democratic Convention, Kennedy might never have picked Johnson as his running mate. When Johnson had announced he was running for President that year, Phil Graham helped write the speech; he even



"I'm surprised at you, Ted. You know we're not allowed to serve alcoholic beverages to dogs."

• •

"ended up on his hands and knees, crawling around at the last minute to retrieve one of Lyndon's contact lenses, which had popped out." This is a posture unbecoming to a publisher of newspapers. James Reston, who was then a friend of the Grahams and was the most eminent figure at the *Times*, repeatedly declined offers to go to the *Post*. Phil Graham, he said, was "too hot for me, too involved in politics, felt too deeply about people, even his own people on the paper."

Nor did Phil Graham always have the mettle to stand by his best people. During the McCarthy era, the *Post* acquitted itself well, especially in the reports of Murrey Marder, but when everyone from the Chicago *Tribune* to a two-bit conservative publication entitled *Plain Talk* attacked the *Post* as Washington's *Pravda*, Graham showed dangerous signs of capitulation. At one point, he wanted to fire the highly respected editorial writer Alan Barth, who had dared to defend the right of Earl Browder, the former secretary-general of the Communist Party in America, not to name names before a Senate subcommittee. Graham's mentor, Felix Frankfurter, talked him out of firing Barth, but Graham did print an apologetic note in the paper undermining the original editorial. Graham supported Eisenhower in 1952 and, in the service of that support, censored the work of his greatest star, the cartoonist Herblock, in the last two weeks of the campaign.

In the late nineteen-fifties, Phil Graham's health and behavior also presented increasingly difficult problems—problems that might have been solved with medication, if he had not refused it. He was a manic-depressive. For years, Katharine witnessed her husband's violent mood swings—his periods of heavy drinking, his bizarre behavior, his prolonged depressions. And yet his periods of lucidity and humor, of lively intelligence, were frequent enough to confuse her and delay any sense of reckoning. With time, Katharine was becoming more and more troubled, less and less secure. The two most powerful presences in her life—her mother and her husband—were both clearly suffering from psychological problems, yet Katharine still felt inferior to them. "My mother seemed to undermine so much of what I did, subtly belittling my choices and my activities in light of her greater, more important ones," she writes. "As for Phil, at the same time that he was building me up, he was tearing me down. As he emerged more on the journalistic and political scenes, I increasingly saw my role as the tail to his kite—and the more I felt overshadowed, the more it became a reality." Phil Graham began referring to his wife, who by 1952 had given birth to four children, as Porky; to heighten the joke, he gave her as a present a French butcher-shop head of a pig. "Another habit of his that emerged during those years was that, when we were with friends and I was talking, he would look at me in such a way that I felt I was going on too long and boring people. Gradually, I ceased talking much at all when we were out together." She "felt like Trilby to his Svengali"; she felt as if he had "created" her, that she was totally dependent.

"Even now I can't sort out my feelings about this; it's hard to separate what was a function of Phil's terrible affliction, which manifested itself only later, and what was more basic. The truth is that I adored him and saw only the positive side of what he was doing for me. I simply didn't connect my lack of self-confidence with his behavior to me."

The end of this increasingly painful marriage was prolonged and extremely public. In 1962, Phil Graham met Robin Webb, a young Australian woman who had been working in *Newsweek's* Paris bureau, and he began appearing with her at *Newsweek* bureaus all over the world. Katharine soon learned of their affair, when she picked up the phone and "heard Phil and Robin talking to each other in words that made the situation plain."

Not long after Phil left her, Katharine sent him a desperate telegram:

> Mascots are for loving helping and listening. You are stuck with me as a mascot repeat mascot. The moment of happiness you gave me is more help than most people are given in a lifetime, Thank you for it. I'm here if you need me and I love you.

Phil wrote a letter in return that Katharine rightly describes as "pretty strange":

> Dearest Kay—
>
> One morning when you were despairing I tried to help you by words. I told you how lonely it had been when I had visited my Far Country and how I could not get near enough to help you in your Far Country. And by the words you came near enough for help and I touched you and we went for a walk and were again in life.
>
> I have now gone. Gone not to my Far Country but to my Destiny. It happens to be a beautiful Destiny and I shall be there while it is beautiful and while it is not.
>
> I did not go to help you. I did not go because I did not want to help you. I went because it was my Destiny. And by now "helping" you I believe and I pray I shall *help* you.

Soon Phil began telling his friends that he was going to divorce his wife and marry Robin Webb. He also began making public scenes—once launching into an obscene tirade during a speech, and, on another occasion, punching out a detective at an airport. At one point, President Kennedy dispatched a Presidential plane to get him from Phoenix to Washington.

What made the situation even more complicated was the status of the *Post*. Not only did Phil own the majority of the stock but he also believed that his efforts as publisher entitled him to ownership. To win the paper, Phil employed the most feared lawyer in Washington, Edward Bennett Williams. Katharine knew that her husband and her old way of life were lost to her, but, fearful though she was of confrontation and of Williams, she was determined to fight for the paper.

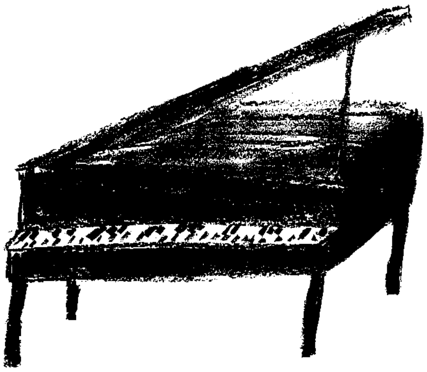
She did not have to. In the summer of 1963, Phil seemed to be getting better—he was undergoing treatment at a psychiatric center in Maryland—and there was even hope of resuming a normal life at home. On an August afternoon, Phil and Katharine went together to their farm, Glen Welby:

> We had lunch on two trays on the back porch at Glen Welby, chatting and listening to some classical records. After lunch, we went upstairs to our bedroom for a nap. After a short while, Phil got up, saying he wanted to lie down in a separate bedroom he sometimes used. Only a few minutes later, there was the ear-splitting noise of a gun going off indoors. I bolted out of the room and ran around in a frenzy looking for him. When I opened the door to a downstairs bathroom, I found him.

PHIL GRAHAM was forty-eight when he died. His widow was left to confront all the myths and all the insulations that her marriage, her class, and her sex had imposed on her. In middle age and in a state of grief, she suddenly found herself in charge of a newspaper that had yet to show any signs of greatness, and of a group of men who regarded her with, at best, considerable suspicion. In meeting after meeting, in Washington and New York, she was the only woman in the room, and not a self-confident one at that. She had not yet developed the steely mask that would later trouble the sleep of her adjutants. Before making speeches, she shook with terror; in the face of unsettling news, she had the unfortunate habit of breaking down in tears. The pressures were enormous and her preparations for them slight. She had to learn to be a publisher and, what was more, to be a far better publisher than her husband had been. ("One area that, surprisingly, started to shift under my feet was the *Post's* editorial quality. I hadn't realized that the *Post* wasn't perfectly okay.")

Surrounded by her male editors and executives, Graham could recognize in herself the same reflexes of deference she had learned as a daughter and as a wife. When she suggested to the *Newsweek* editors that it might be a good idea to hire Aline Saarinen, of the *Times*, to edit the back of the book, they brushed the suggestion off, saying that the closings were too late, that "the physical demands" of the job would be too much. Graham found herself agreeing: Saarinen would not get an offer.

> I adopted the assumption of many of my generation that women were intellectually inferior to men, that we were not capable of governing, leading, managing anything but our homes and our children. Once married, we were confined to running houses, providing a smooth atmosphere, dealing with children, supporting our husbands. Pretty soon this kind of thinking—indeed, this kind of life—took its toll: most of us *became* somehow inferior. We grew less able to keep up with what was happening in the world. In a group we remained largely silent, unable to participate in conversations and discussions. Unfortunately, this incapacity often produced in women—as it did in me—a diffuse way of talking, an inability to be concise, a tendency to ramble, to start at the end and work backwards, to overexplain, to go on for too long, to apologize.
>
> Women traditionally also have suffered—and many still do—from an exaggerated desire to please, a syndrome so instilled in women of my generation that it inhibited my behavior for many years, and in ways still does. Although at the time I didn't realize what was happening, I was unable to make a decision that might displease those around me. For years, whatever directive I may have issued ended with the phrase "if it's all right with you." If I thought I'd done anything to make someone unhappy, I'd agonize. The end result of all this was that many of us, by middle age, arrived at the state we were trying most to avoid: we bored our husbands, who had done their fair share in helping reduce us to this condition, and they wandered off to younger, greener pastures.



Circumstances seemed to conspire in challenging Graham. Some companies thought the *Post* such a potentially profitable property, and Graham such an unlikely figure to run it, that they came to her with offers to buy it. To the surprise of some, she easily warded off the blandishments of Samuel I. Newhouse (once with a somewhat duplicitous Theodore Sorensen as her agent) and the Times-Mirror Company. From the start, she was intent on keeping the paper within the family and eventually passing it on to her children.

But that did not mean she was strong in all things. Phil Graham's world had been the world of the powerful, and his widow did not want to offend its leading members. At one meeting with L.B.J. in 1964, in his bedroom, she sat in an armchair while the President lay down on the bed. "I then talked in terms I had inherited from Phil and in a way I would never have done later—and that embarrasses me now," she writes. "I told him I had the feeling that he thought my point of view was different from Phil's, but that in general Phil and I had agreed. I said that, much as I admired and loved President Kennedy, Phil personally had got along with him much better than I had. I also said that I admired the legislation he himself had got passed and was for him and wanted to make sure he knew it."

On the first great story of her era as publisher—the war in Vietnam—the *Post's* performance was nearly an embarrassment. While the *Times* and the two wire services, A.P. and U.P.I., were infuriating the White House with reporting that showed the contrast between the official statements of the generals and the dire situation in the field, the *Post* could not keep pace.

In 1967, Katharine wrote a letter to Johnson (not quoted in the book) expressing enormous empathy: "These times are so difficult that my heart bleeds for you. . . . The only thanks you ever seem to receive is a deafening chorus of carping criticism. Unlike Phil, I find it hard to express emotion. I can't write in the eloquent words he used. But I want you to know I am among the many people in this country who believe in you and are behind you with trust and devotion."

Her obeisance was institutional and political, not merely personal. In the beginning, even Richard Nixon got the same treatment. On the eve of the first Moratorium against the war, the *Post* published a nasty editorial (also not quoted in "Personal History") that tried to set the paper apart from the antiwar movement. "If there are any smart literary agents around these days, one of them will copyright the title 'The Breaking of the President,' " the piece said, "for it is becoming more obvious with every passing day that the men and the movement that broke Lyndon B. Johnson's authority in 1968 are out to break Richard M. Nixon in 1969. . . . There is still a vital distinction . . . between the constitutionally protected expression of dissent . . . and mass movements aimed at breaking the President." Eventually, the debate over the war led to a shift in the editorial page—the conservative Russell Wiggins was replaced by the more liberal Philip Geyelin—but the *Post* never completely distinguished itself on Vietnam.

Katharine Graham's establishment position on the war did not go unnoticed. In 1966, Truman Capote, her neighbor at the U.N. Plaza, where she kept a New York apartment, threw his famous Black-and-White costume ball for her. ("I had a French dress—a Balmain design, copied at Bergdorf Goodman," she writes. "It was plain white crêpe with slate-colored beads around the neck and the sleeves. The mask was made to match, also at Bergdorf's, by Halston, who was then still making hats.") Graham considered the ball a kind of coming out for a "middle-aged debutante." But in Pete Hamill's column in the New York *Post* she was suddenly Marie Antoinette. Hamill interspersed a faux-sprightly account of the party ("And Truman was just marvelous!") with "The helicopter landed in a scrubby open field six miles north of Bong Son." It wasn't subtle, but it hit home.

In 1965, Graham helped herself and the paper immeasurably by hiring Ben Bradlee, *Newsweek's* charismatic bureau chief in Washington and a friend of the Kennedys'. Bradlee had been Phil's friend, not hers, but he pushed for the job of managing editor, pushed with his customary blend of charm and vulgarity ("I'd give my left one" for the job, he told her at lunch one day), and she melted. Over the years, she would fire an endless line of *Newsweek* editors and *Post* executives, but in Bradlee she had found someone who from the start satisfied her in every respect: élan, strength, social class, and talent. And, under Bradlee's urging, she began spending the money necessary to create, among other things, a first-rate foreign staff. With Graham's support, Bradlee was soon firing the lazy and the mediocre, the racist and the dull, and he then set about raiding topflight papers around the country for their best talent. The talent level in the newsroom began to shift, and so did the culture of the place. By 1968, reporting and editorials on Vietnam by Ward Just and a few others helped change the atmosphere of reverence on the pages of the *Post*, and that change had its effect on the thinking of the publisher—so strong an effect that when the *Times*, thanks to Neil Sheehan and his source, Daniel Ellsberg, began printing the Pentagon Papers, on June 13, 1971, Bradlee felt wounded, and, with Graham's encouragement, pushed his staff to find its own copy of the documents. By June 17th, thanks to his national editor, Ben Bagdikian, he had his own set of papers.

Graham had every reason to refuse or defer publication of the Pentagon Papers. The *Times* was immediately in trouble with the White House and the courts. The Post Company had gone public just two days before getting the papers, and publication could easily have affected its stock prices for the worse. Moreover,

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SHOWCASE

TOY STORIES

THOUGH the photographer David Levinthal uses the phrase "intentionally ambiguous" to describe his pictures, we somehow know—from the rectitude of the posture, the open white collar, the whiff of "Gunsmoke"—that the fellow emerging from a saloon on the opposite page is a good guy. Less obvious, perhaps, is the fact that he's only four inches tall.

Since the early seventies, Levinthal has been photographing inanimate figures placed in elaborate dioramas—a strategy that lends itself to open-ended narratives in which the viewer is the tale-teller. "I feel that I'm setting the stage," he says. "Action has taken place before the image, and action will take place in the future. I've captured the moment in between."

"Hitler Moves East," a 1977 book that Levinthal produced in collaboration with Garry Trudeau, a former Yale School of Art classmate, presented a black-and-white reimagining of the German invasion of the Soviet Union. Last year, the photographer came full circle, with "Mein Kampf," a deeply spooky color-Polaroid chronicle that, as he puts it, managed to "subsume the toyness" of his props. In between, he has—more whimsically, but with the same measure of irony—focussed his fetishism on cowboys, bathing beauties, and Japanese-made sex-and-bondage figurines. (Asked when he last photographed a human being, he replied, "Do my niece and nephew count? Then it was about ten years ago, on vacation in Mexico.")

This week, a Levinthal retrospective begins a two-month run at the International Center of Photography; a smaller show opens next week at the Janet Borden gallery. Both will include pictures of his most recent cast of characters: blackface icons from the Aunt Jemima-cookie-jar school of kitsch. They are certain to offend someone. The Institute of Contemporary Art, in Philadelphia, apparently burned by the controversy that flared during its Robert Mapplethorpe and Andres Serrano shows, rejected an exhibit of them last summer.

—MARK SINGER

"Untitled," from "The Wild West" (1987-89).

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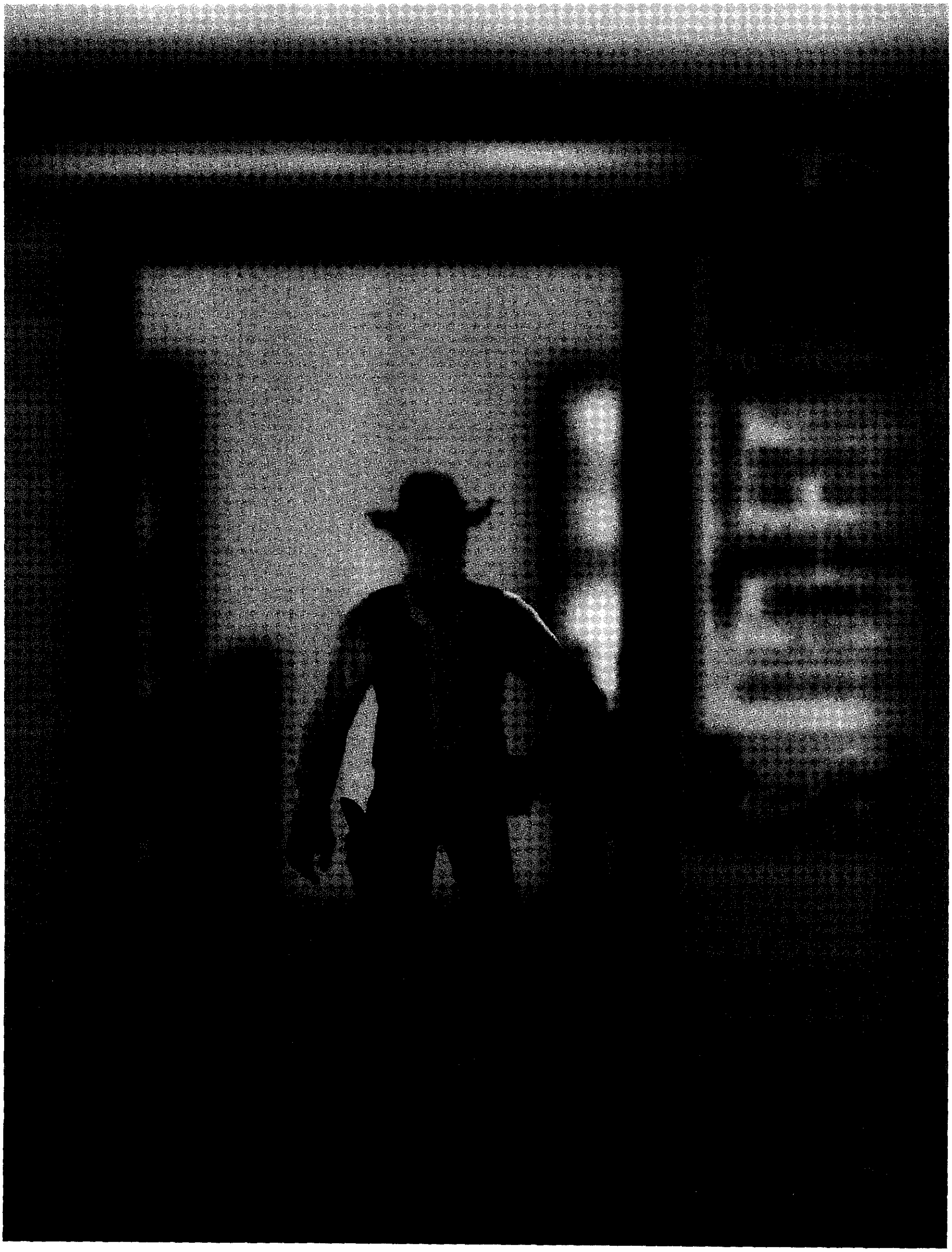
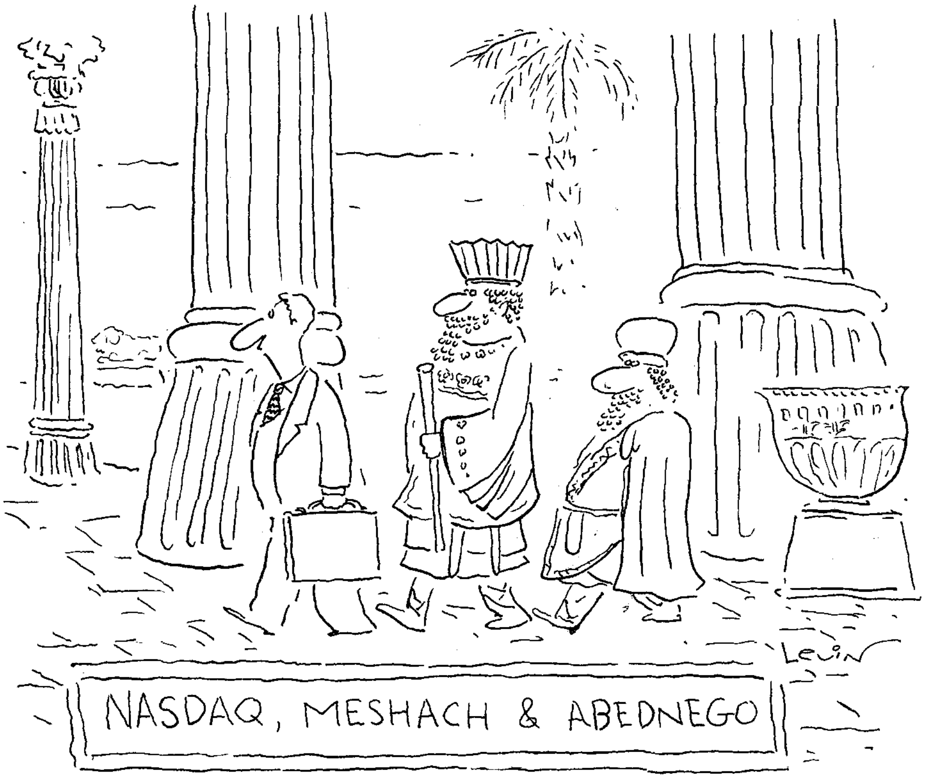




Graham was acutely sensitive about the image of the *Post* as a liberal newspaper and, as a result, had chosen a law firm with close connections to the Republican Party; not surprisingly, Graham's lawyers urged her to delay publishing or not to publish at all.

To a reporter, and especially a reporter in 1996, there doesn't seem to be a need to make any decision at all. If you have the goods, you say, "Screw it," and publish. But in the spring of 1971 the Supreme Court had not yet declared its strong support of press freedoms to the degree that it would in the Pentagon Papers case; moreover, the *Post* itself did not yet have the financial standing or the self-identity to go forward simply and with confidence. Graham was gambling every sort of inheritance that was important to her: the paper, her fortune, and, perhaps most important, the judgment of the ghosts who crowded around her. If there was one journalist she admired more than any other, it was her friend James Reston, and it was Reston who, despite his many virtues, had famously said, "I will not have the New York *Times* muckraking the President of the United States." But in the end she made her decision. "All right," she told Bradlee on the telephone, in the midst of a reception at her house, with the *Post's* lawyer counselling caution in her free ear. "Let's go, let's publish." And by doing that she opened the way to Watergate and to the *Post's* position as a rival of the *Times*.

WEEK after week, the leading figures of the Nixon Administration lambasted Graham and the *Post* for the Watergate stories. Charles Colson, for one, tried to dismiss the conspiracy as fiction—a charge that, if true, would probably have ruined the paper forever. "The charge of subverting a whole political process, *that is a fantasy*, a work of fiction rivalling only 'Gone with the Wind' in circulation and 'Portnoy's Complaint' for indecency," Colson said. "Mr. Bradlee now sees himself as the self-appointed leader of . . . the tiny fringe of arrogant élitists who infect the healthy mainstream of American journalism with their own peculiar view of the world." The fact is, though, that two days after making that statement Colson talked to Howard Hunt about the need to supply more financial help to the defendants in the Watergate trial.

John Ehrlichman, Ronald Ziegler, H. R. Haldeman, and Nixon himself all charged the *Post* with disloyalty. Nixon told his men to "treat the *Post* absolutely coldly" and spoon-feed "scoops" to its local rival, the *Star*. He also vowed to "do a number" on the *Post*, and to go after the Graham family's broadcasting licenses. The reporters and editors might have got a nervous thrill from the Administration's hysteria, but Mrs. Graham did not. In the midst of the crisis, she wrote to Ehrlichman, saying, "What appears in the *Post* is not a reflection of my personal feelings. And by the same token, I would add that my continuing and genuine pride in the paper's performance over the past few months—the period that seems to be at issue—does *not proceed from some sense that it has* gratified my personal whim. It proceeds from my belief that the editors and reporters have fulfilled the highest standards of professional duty and responsibility."

At about the same time, she was on a cross-country flight and ran into Senator Bob Dole, who was then working as chairman and chief hatchet man for the Republican National Committee. In speeches, Dole had accused her paper of waging an ideological vendetta against the President.

"By the way, Senator, I didn't say I hated Nixon," she told Dole.

"Oh, you know," he said, "during a campaign they put these things in your hands and you just read them." (Dole admitted the same to a *Times* reporter after the 1996 campaign. He never really meant it when he spent weeks vilifying the *Times* for bias, he told Katharine Q. Seelye.)

Graham had undeniably, historically, made the right decision, and in the years to come she supported the investigative efforts of the *Post;* but the signs of her ambivalence about her social and political role never ceased. As she grew older and more self-confident, she could be imperious, even frightening to her editors and executives, but her desire to please, or at least to get along with, those in power, never entirely faded. In the early days of Watergate, she tried, in rather submissive terms, to build a personal bridge to the one man who exceeded even Nixon in his public hatred of the *Post*—Spiro Agnew. Her gesture "in retrospect seems to me undignified, considering the awful slamming we were taking from him," she writes. "I think my behavior was a combination of a rational idea—that it was better to be talking to people who hated us or disapproved of us than not—and that good old-fashioned encumbrance of mine, the desire to please."

Not long after Watergate, she worried about "over-involvement" and a newspaper's need to guard against "the romantic tendency to picture itself in the role of a heroic and beleaguered champion, defending virtues against overwhelming odds." Watergate, she writes, "had been an aberration, and I felt we couldn't look everywhere for conspiracies and cover-ups."

Mrs. Graham's personal relations with the powerful and the once powerful became, if anything, even more visible after Watergate. Robert McNamara, Henry Kissinger, Lawrence Eagleburger, George Shultz, Paul Nitze, Douglas Dillon, McGeorge Bundy, Jack Valenti, Joe Califano: her list of establishment friends is long and decidedly nonpartisan. If she has been cool to any Presidents since Watergate, they have been the two Democrats, Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton, not least because they came to town with the greatest suspicion of old-line Washington—Katharine Graham's Washington.

Ronald Reagan made sure to accept invitations to Mrs. Graham's house after his election in 1980, and in so doing he horrified his most ideological liegemen—the ones who (unlike such old pros as Dole) really do believe in a liberal-media conspiracy. At a meeting of the Religious Roundtable, Howard Phillips, the head of the Conservative Caucus, warned darkly, "You cannot always have Kay Graham going to your cocktail parties and smiling at you. If by June the Washington establishment is happy with Ronald Reagan, then you should be unhappy with Ronald Reagan." In the coming years, Mrs. Graham formed an especially close friendship with Nancy Reagan. During the 1988 visit to Moscow, I remember, Mrs. Graham said that perhaps she ought to telephone Nancy and tell her about the lengths that the Kremlin was going to in preparing for an imminent summit. The editors around her grumbled almost inaudibly, but just enough, it seemed to me, to nudge her out of such a call.

"I see nothing wrong with the fact that people in power often deal with others on more than one level," she writes. "Sometimes you become friends with people with whom you work because of some common interest or just because you have to work together. But there are also relationships that start out that way yet cross over to become real friendships that last forever. Some of my deepest friendships began with an administration person whom I got to know because of my association with the paper."

To read "Personal History" is to understand how ridiculous is the right-wing image of Graham as the matriarch of the liberal-media conspiracy. Her allegiance to democratic capitalism is no less firm than that of William F. Buckley, Jr., and her inherent faith that the establishment élites will do the right thing is nearly absolute. She really does seem to believe that Watergate was an aberration.

There is no doubt that the vast majority of reporters at papers like the *Post* are themselves more liberal than the general population: a recent poll showed that eighty-nine per cent of Washington-based correspondents voted for Clinton in 1992. But that statistic has to be balanced by the conservatism of nearly all publishers. The *Post* pursued Watergate as a news story, not as an ideological crusade. It similarly (if with less success) pursued Iran-Contra and Bill Clinton's ethical droppings. By contrast, the *Wall Street Journal's* editorial page ignored Watergate and Iran-Contra as ideologically inconvenient and has pursued Whitewater with the foam visible on its lips. If one compares the approach of the liberal media (the *Post*, the *Times*, etc.) with that of the increasingly powerful conservative media (the *Journal* editorial page, the *Weekly Standard*, *The American Spectator*, etc.), it is preposterous to say that the rules of the game are the same.

Katharine Graham is now seventy-nine, and the *Post* is in the hands of her son Donald, who is fifty-one. His temperament, his interests, and his style are quite different from his mother's. He does not travel the globe to interview foreign leaders. He does not live in Georgetown. His friends are, for the most part, not especially famous. His most passionate political interests are local. Probably the greatest debate the paper must face, both in the newsroom and as a story, is the divide between black and white. As a publisher, Don Graham may never face a pair of crises as critical as the Pentagon Papers and Watergate. But, if he does, the decisions should not be as hard for him as they were for Katharine Graham. He does not have to invent himself, nor does he have to invent a set of principles. He has an example to follow. ♦

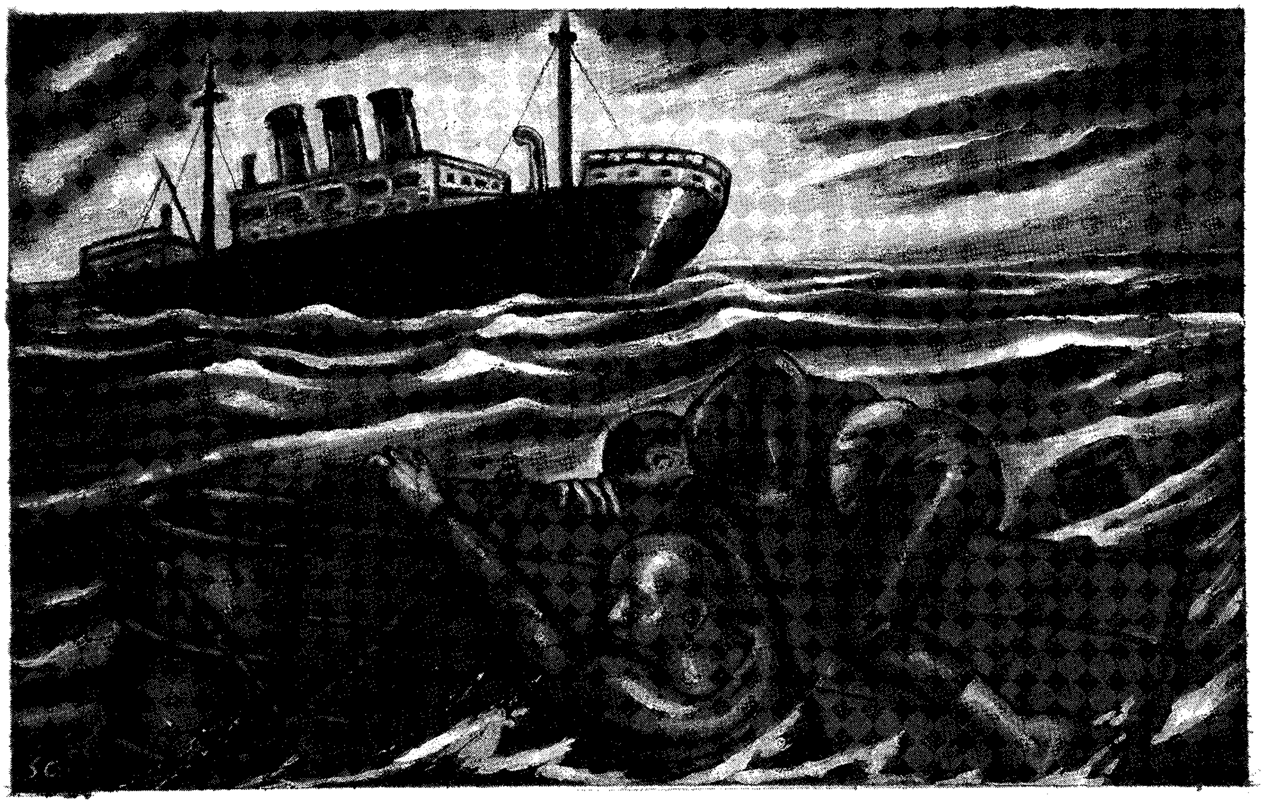
"My doll ate my homework."

A REPORTER AT LARGE

THE UNQUIET SHIP

What happened aboard the freighter Dubai that led to the shocking fate of its stowaways—and to the haunting of its crew?

BY SCOTT L. MALCOMSON



SUE COE

LATE last February, when four Filipino sailors—a boatswain, an able-bodied seaman, an oiler, and an engineer—first met in an Indian port to join their new ship, the Maersk Dubai, there was no indication that they had signed up for anything out of the ordinary. None of the four knew any of the other Filipino members of the Maersk Dubai's crew, but that was to be expected; merchant seamen change ships all the time. It was also no surprise to them that all the chief officers on the ship were Taiwanese. This sort of segregation has become common on merchant ships. Often a barely functional English is the only shared language on board, and many sailors will refer to officers, and even to each other, by job title rather than by name. As experienced seamen, the four Filipino sailors joining the freighter knew that the chain of command is all that holds such an intimate yet distrustful community together. They did not know that their reluctance to violate that chain of command on the Maersk Dubai could have fatal consequences.

As the Dubai sailed west, another itinerant group gathered in the Spanish port of Algeciras, near Gibraltar. These men were Romanians, mostly farm boys from Transylvania. Some had known each other back home, but most had met *pe drum*—"on the road," as the Romanians say—travelling in the shadows of the law. They wanted to come to the New World, and they planned to accomplish this by stowing away aboard a ship—preferably one bound for Canada, which is rightly believed to be less harsh toward illegal immigrants than is the United States. When the Dubai arrived at Algeciras, in early March, the Romanians were waiting.

On March 11th, at least four men attempted to board the ship by the simple method of walking up a staircase that had been lowered to the dock. When the ship cast off, just after midnight, two of them—almost certainly Petre Sângeorzan and Radu Danciu—were hiding somewhere on board. It was Rodolfo Miguel, the boatswain, who discovered them while making his rounds the next morning. "I am the one who found these two stowaways," he told me, months later. "They were hiding in the forward part of the ship"—near a catwalk, on the port side.

Miguel is forty-two but looks younger. His hair—dark, with new bits of gray—flops onto his forehead when he gestures, as he does often; tall for a Filipino, and big, he speaks percussively and tends to act out his stories. He looks accustomed to ordering men about. He wasn't especially afraid of the stowaways, nor did they seem fearful of him. They addressed him as "señor" and held cupped palms to their mouths. "I brought them to the crew mess. Then I asked the second cook to bring them some bread and coffee, as they were hungry at that time. Then I called the duty officer."

There was nothing unusual in any of this. Over the past six years, port-security improvements have pushed European would-be stowaways to the slacker Mediterranean harbors. Algeciras enjoys a popularity among such stowaways not only because of its loose security but also because a number of the ships that dock there sail on to North America. It is normal practice among stowaways to find out where a ship is going, sneak aboard, and hide for two days or so—long enough to get beyond the convenient reach of the port nation's coast guard. After this period, stowaways generally declare themselves to the crew and are then put to work performing some disagreeable job, like scraping off rust. Just prior to the next port of call, the stowaways are often locked up, as a demonstration of the ship's diligence. Then they are turned over to port police. Some countries, among them Canada, levy fines against ships for carrying stowaways. But the fines are not prohibitive, and the better-run or more affluent shipping companies—such as Taiwan's Yangming Marine Transport Corporation, the fifteenth-largest freight company in the world, which owns the Dubai—have stowaway insurance. On most ships, carrying stowaways is not a big deal.

For reasons that may never become clear, it was a big deal on the Dubai. Captain Shiou Cheng was only thirty-four, the youngest ship's captain with the Yangming line. A handsome, slightly built, somewhat tentative man (one sailor has described him as "demure"), he is far from the conventional image of a sea captain. His father had spent his working life at sea, first in the Taiwanese Navy, from which he retired as a commander, then as an officer in the merchant marine. Shiou Cheng, an only son, obeyed the tradition of filial piety and brought his aging parents to live with him, his wife, and their young child in Taipei.

Shiou Cheng has been dependent on and loyal to the Yangming Corporation since he was eighteen. At sixteen, he began a five-year training program at Taipei's China Junior College of Marine Technology, and Yangming helped fund the last three years of his schooling in exchange for a three-year work commitment after graduation. He has spent his entire career with the company. He signed up for every training and promotional program as soon as he was qualified. He was rarely home; the company rewarded him with a rapid rise. When he took over the Dubai, in January, 1996, he had only four months' experience as a captain, and relied heavily on his somewhat leathery chief officer, Chung-chih Wu, who, at forty-eight, was the second-oldest man aboard. But on a ship, of course, final authority and responsibility lie exclusively with the captain. At sea, that is the basis of order.

Petre Sângeorzan and Radu Danciu were from a very different part of the world. Both came from the remote Transylvanian district of Bistrita-Nasaud, a hilly region of farming villages northeast of the beautiful ancient city of Cluj. The farmers of Bistrita-Nasaud favor large families and walled domestic courtyards; they guard their Austro-Hungarian heritage against their lowland countrymen to the south and east, whom they consider rather louche; and, even in the worst times, such as the long reign of Nicolae Ceauşescu, they have managed to send their young men abroad to work for a few years. Sângeorzan and Danciu had come from Transylvania through France to Algeciras—and, evidently, to the Dubai.

Miguel brought the two stowaways to the bridge. The officers there were not pleased to see them. Moments later, the captain arrived. Usually, Miguel said, the captain's face was "just like a boy's," but, he went on, "when they noticed there were strangers on the ship, you would never see that baby face the same way again. Even the chief officer— Oh, my God, it is not normal." The captain and the chief officer began to argue in Chinese. A sailor was summoned who, like the stowaways, knew some Spanish, and he conveyed the officers' questions. The stowaways handed their passports and photographs of their families to Miguel, and he showed them to the captain. The stowaways explained that they knew the Dubai was plying the route between Europe and North America. This statement seemed to upset the captain greatly. "Bring them down," he ordered, and he made a gesture of throwing them. This was when Miguel realized that the captain had decided to put the two men overboard.

The chief officer took the stowaways to an empty cabin. Shortly afterward, Miguel went below, where he encountered the second officer assembling life vests from plastic foam. Miguel didn't think that the vests were sufficient to support men of the stowaways' size, but, he told me, "I didn't want to be in an argument with him," and he added, "I could not express myself." Miguel did not know how to communicate with the officers any further. They were so angry, he said, that he "could not talk to them in a nice way." So Miguel went to the crew mess for a break and a cup of coffee. "I just calmed myself," he said, "because I could not explain at that time my feelings."

Next, Miguel saw to the improvising of a raft, because, as he remembers saying to the captain, "it will be a big problem if we can't give them life vests or *anything* like that." A raft was built and lowered into the water, but the rope holding it broke, and "it was gone, because the current is very strong." Miguel and his men then worked on a second raft, which consisted of two empty oil drums and some pieces of wood, all fastened together with rope. He couldn't think what else to do, especially since the chief officer had warned him not to interfere. "I was *helpless* at that time, but God knows about my heart," he told me. "I did my best."

Officers and crewmen gathered around the two stowaways at the port-side pilot ladder. Miguel and others later reported that the officers were forcing the stowaways down the ladder to the raft. Most of the witnesses recalled seeing one of the stowaways on his knees, begging. However much some accounts may differ in detail, no one seems to dispute that somewhere west of Algeciras two men were compelled to board a jerry-built raft and were set adrift. This could have happened only with the consent of Captain Shiou Cheng, who, according to one witness, had shouted at the begging Romanian, "You don't know the problem! I have a baby, I have a family!" The water was agitated and cold. Miguel looked away, not wanting to see what would happen.

The ship's second cook, Ricardo Aquino, did not look away, and months later, when he was interviewed by Canadian police investigating the events on the Dubai, he described the scene:

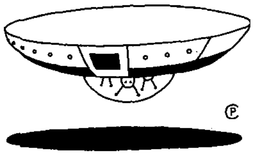
> The last time I saw the two stowaways, they were climbing onto an improvised raft consisting of two kegs and a wooden board, tied together with a rope. . . . The vessel moved, and I could no longer see what was happening to the two Romanians, but I think they drowned under the vessel, because I could not see them any longer, although I was watching them very atten-

tively. The water was very cold, with high waves, and there was a strong wind. I noticed that, around their chests, the two stowaways had rolled some improvised life vests made of pieces of plastic foam. I must explain that these improvisations could not help a man to stay afloat. The same applies to the raft.

According to Romanian investigators, the fathers of Petre Sângeorzan and Radu Danciu have not heard from their sons since.

As for Miguel, he went off by himself, "like a tired boxer," as he puts it. "I am sitting silently, thinking of what happened," he told me. There was "an emotion on that ship that has never happened before"—something that Miguel, in his rough English, later called simply "the pressure." Worrying the arms of a chair in a dimly lighted living room in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Miguel tried to convey what had changed aboard the Dubai. "The pressure," he said, "is already inside the ship." The pressure stayed inside the ship, and did not lessen with time.

A SHIP is a particularly rule-bound place. One does not upset its order lightly. Each sailor or officer depends on his shipmates to do their jobs, for if one man fails to do his job it can endanger the lives of all the others. When Miguel tried to explain to me what had happened on the Dubai, he kept mentioning rules. He emphasized that throwing someone overboard is against a seaman's training, and that the captain was ignoring maritime rules. But, of course, sailors do not enforce the rules at sea; the captain does. The only aspect of life at sea that is not effectively regulated is crimes committed by officers.



This can put witnesses to officers' crimes in an awkward legal position: there is no higher authority to turn to. Twentieth-century treaties agree that a crime committed on a ship at sea should be tried in the courts of the nation whose flag the ship flies. But this rule is, as sailors know, of doubtful value, because more and more ships are sailing under flags of convenience. It seems safe to assume that no high-seas crime, of whatever magnitude, will soon be tried in the courts of Liberia, say, no matter how many ships are registered there. In the meantime, the anecdotal impression among sailors and stowaways is that stowaways' lives are becoming cheaper.

Besides, the ethnic structure of many merchant vessels means that one's advancement from the lower caste requires a certain kind of betrayal of one's fellow-sailors, and this makes it difficult for crewmen to trust one another. Increasingly, the officers on merchant ships are from a nation that is doing well in the world, whereas their crews are drawn from poorer countries—notably, the Philippines. Even within the officer caste, ethnicity can trump social class. One of two Filipino officers on the Dubai, Ariel Broas, the third engineer, told me that the Taiwanese "look at the Filipino same like a flea," and that in the officers' mess the Taiwanese spoke among themselves in Chinese. I gathered that in weeks at sea Broas, a witty and educated man, had never had a mealtime conversation with his Taiwanese superiors.

Other strong disincentives exist for the reporting of officers' crimes. In the ports where sailors are hired—Manila, for example—the business is controlled by recruiting agents, who usually work for the big shipping companies. The sailors alternate between submision to two absolute powers—the captain and the recruiting agent. To oppose either is to lose one's livelihood. To oppose a captain's will could be considered mutinous. Nobody on the Dubai in mid-March of last year was willing to risk a mutiny for the sake of two strangers. A sense of guilt for not having taken such a risk would come later; at the time, the crewmen just followed orders. They didn't force anyone overboard, but neither did they oppose those who did.

And so two men were set adrift somewhere west of Algeciras, and no one talked about it. (The stowaways have been identified only because other Romanians in Algeciras saw them get on the ship.) The Maersk Dubai continued to sail westward, and the sailors went about their duties. Yet the new emotion that Miguel felt, the "pressure" inside the ship, would not go away. The purpose of a rigid shipboard hierarchy is to insure safety on an unpredictable sea, but the captain's decision to put two men overboard had made some of the seamen deeply uneasy. This was a terrible reversal of the natural order: the captain himself had made their life at sea unpredictable. Miguel later said that from that time forward the men became wary of one another, fearful of what might happen next. "Probably all of us are afraid," the ship's oiler, Juanito Ilagan, Jr., told me. "We pretend we didn't see anything." Not very communicative to begin with, the crew ceased talking altogether.

About a week and a half later, after several stops on the Eastern Seaboard, the Dubai reached Houston. There nine Filipino sailors from the freighter dropped by the Lou Lawler Seafarers' Center. Three Taiwanese officers—the captain and his first and second mates—went to the center, too. Father Randy Albano, the center's pastor, tried to chat with the captain. "I remember telling him, 'You are the youngest captain I've ever met,' " the priest told me. "I still remember him. He looks very young." The captain ignored him and continued talking with his officers. Father Albano, who is from the Philippines, spoke instead with the Filipino sailors, notably Miguel, Broas, Ilagan, and Esmeraldo Esteban, an able-bodied seaman. These four had slowly become friends, and that friendship would soon have an unexpected impact on the lives of Captain Cheng and his officers. To the four sailors, who were all religious men, Father Albano represented an authority greater than the captain's, and they needed a new authority.

The Dubai soon left Houston and, after returning to India, passed through the Suez Canal and put in at Algeciras for the second time. Between Houston and Algeciras, the sailors had decided they could trust Albano, and one another, so two of them wrote him a letter. It was dated May 15th, some two months after the stowaway incident, and began, "Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus. This letter intends to inform you about our situation on board M/V Maersk Dubai." The sailors mentioned several minor grievances against their superiors, then started a new paragraph: "The worst thing they did was the violation of Human Rights, when they discharged two stow aways who came from Algeciras, Spain. . . . As far as we all know, human lives must be preserved and save at all cost. . . . We are now begging you to please assist us with our problem." It was signed simply "Crew of M/V Maersk Dubai," but Father Albano thought he knew which men had sent it. He read the letter several times, then faxed it to an affiliated seamen's center in Halifax, Nova Scotia, which would be the ship's next port of call.

THE Dubai stayed in Algeciras only briefly, but long enough for at least four Romanians, once again, to discover the ship's Canadian destination and try to board. And, once again, only two succeeded: Nicolae Pasca and, probably, Gheorghe Mihoc. Pasca had boarded with Sorin Radu, an acquaintance, but after an hour Radu left their hiding place and was caught and put ashore. Mihoc boarded with his brother, Vasile, but Vasile was also caught and put ashore. He waited around Algeciras for several days after the Dubai left, but his brother never showed up, so Vasile figured that he was off to Canada. Both Pasca and Mihoc came from Satu-Mare—a region, in the northwestern corner of Transylvania, that is something of a byword for backwardness. They had lived in villages fifteen kilometres apart but had not known each other, though they had friends in common. They discussed these connections after they did meet each other, in France, *pe drum*, and they subsequently knocked around Spain together. Mihoc was a teenager, just out of high school, but Pasca was in his twenties, and the young man looked after the boy. On the Dubai, they had hidden separately, however, and Pasca didn't even know that his friend had made it aboard.

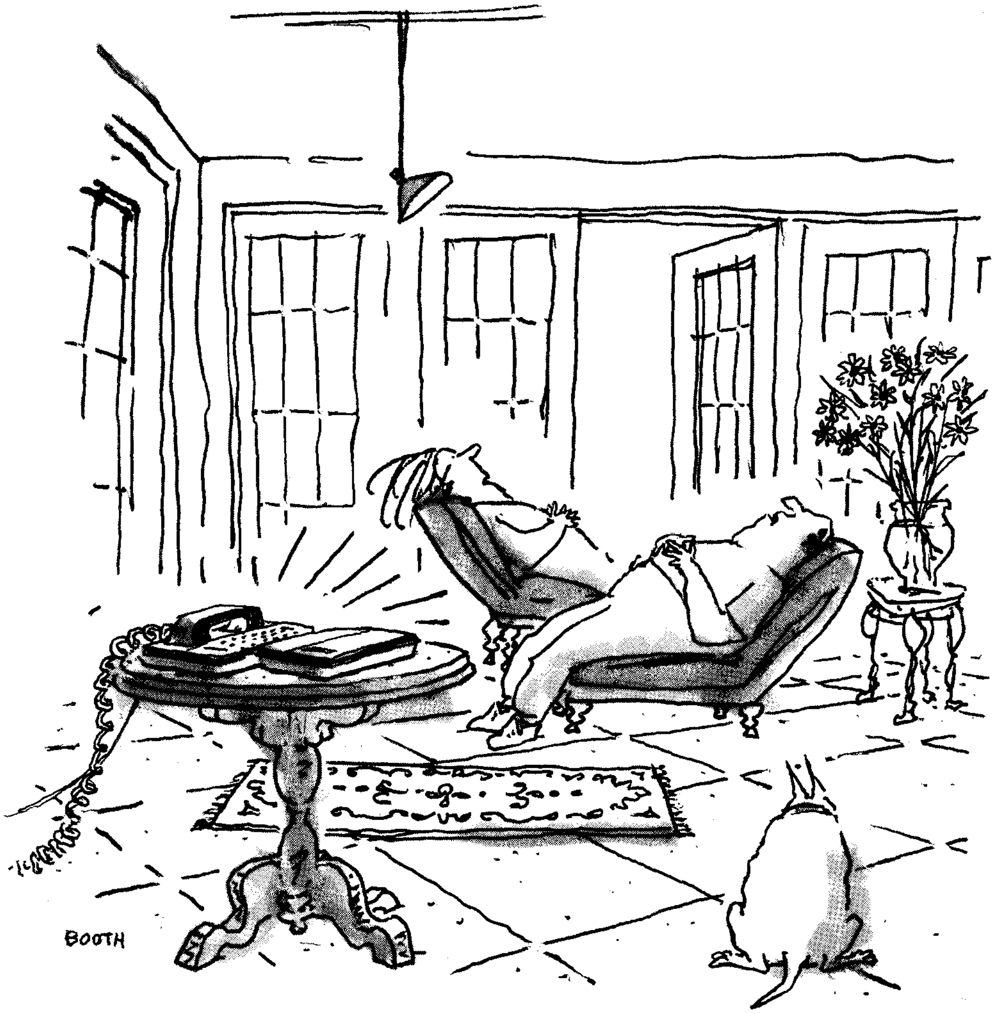
About two days out of Algeciras, the ship's Taiwanese carpenter spotted a man who was presumably Gheorghe Mihoc. The carpenter asked Miguel to seize him. According to Miguel, he responded that he and his men would not help take the stowaway, "because I am not interested anymore in that, me and my fellow-Filipinos are not interested anymore." Miguel retired to the mess. Soon Aquino, the second cook, came below and said that he'd seen several Taiwanese officers rushing toward the stowaway, and that the chief cook had a knife. Here is what Aquino later told police:

> I approached the officers' dining room and looked through the open door. I saw the captain, first mate, chief cook, carpenter, and chief engineer sitting at a table near the main one—more precisely, at the engineers' table. I heard them talking about the stowaway, but all I could make out was the English word "stowaway." After about one minute, I saw the Taiwanese officers leave hurriedly and go onto the deck. I was curious to see what was happening, and I pretended I had business in the laundry, from where I could watch the front part of the deck. . . .
>
> There was a scuffle and something was happening, but I could not see anything, since the area was small and my visual field was blocked. The distance between me and the group in question was about thirty or forty metres, and I could only see the captain. I realized that he also saw me and therefore I drew back, and thus could not see what had happened.

Miguel, meanwhile, had returned to the deck and concealed himself. "I saw the Romanian fighting for his life, and swinging his arms," he said. The chief cook held a knife; the chief officer was holding the man's right side; the captain and others were pushing at his back. Miguel slipped away to his cabin. "I was helpless, I could not do anything anymore," he told me. "I couldn't do something for these people. Because there was a *pressure*, there was already a pressure, on board."

Aquino later returned to the laundry and saw the captain hosing down the deck where the struggle had taken place. Ships' captains do not normally wash the deck. Aquino also noticed that the captain was wearing a particular pair of brown shoes. Shining the captain's shoes was among the second cook's duties, but Aquino did not see those shoes again for three days, and when he did see them they had been washed. "I also noticed that on that day"—the day he saw the captain with the fire hose—"the captain was wearing a green shirt, which I never saw again, although the captain was fond of that shirt." Canadian investigators subsequently found numerous bloodstains on the section of deck indicated by the witnesses.

After about forty-five minutes, Miguel left his cabin and went for a walk on the starboard side of the deck. There he saw Nicolae Pasca, staggering toward him holding a Bible. "Immediately, I stopped," Miguel told me, "and my heart



"You have reached the home of Henry and Maureen Wells. If you are selling something, press 1; if you are asking for money, press 2; if you want to talk about phone service, press 3."

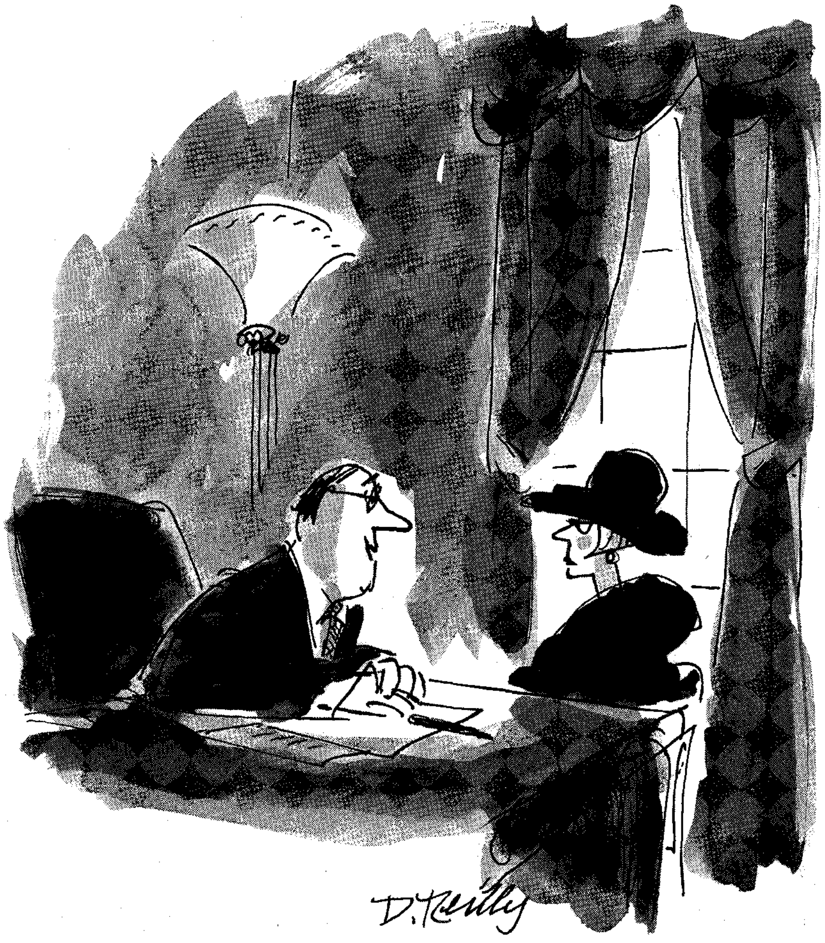
• •

got—*takka-ta, takka-ta.*" Pasca had been vomiting blood for nearly two days and had decided to give himself up. He had boarded the Dubai with no food except some chocolate. He was not a big man, but he was solid. Miguel was almost twice Pasca's age, and taller, and as always he carried his boatswain's knife on his hip. Both men had come a long way to find themselves facing each other on the deck of a ship crossing the Atlantic. Miguel, following regulations, had already given up two men to his officers—two stowaways whom he now presumed dead. And earlier that day he had seen a third struggling, and had done nothing to help him. Now he was facing yet another man—one holding a Bible.

Miguel put his arm around Pasca and led him back into the ship. Pasca was confused, because he had meant to give himself up, and now this Filipino, with whom he shared no language, was trying to hide him. Miguel attempted to explain. He made circles with his fingers, placed them around his eyes, and said "Filipino, *no problema*," then made sideways "V"s with his fingers, put them over his eyes, and said, "Chinese." Then he made the universal sign of throat-slitting.

That night, Miguel took Pasca to a new hiding place, deep inside the ship—a warm spot, near the engines—and gave him to understand that he must stay there. Pasca showed Miguel a photograph of his girlfriend, dressed in traditional Transylvanian costume. Miguel took Pasca's Bible and directed him to Psalm 91, which begins, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Miguel explained to me, "Those verses very strong. I said, 'Read this every time when you sleep.' " Psalm 91 ends, "He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation."

Miguel had consulted with the other Filipinos he trusted—principally Ariel Broas, Esmeraldo Esteban, and Juanito Ilagan—and they agreed that he should take responsibility for Pasca, and, for safety's sake, be the only person who knew where the Romanian was hidden. They gave Pasca a Tagalog code name—Ibon, which means "bird." They would ask Miguel, "Have you fed the bird today?" And the men stayed in their rooms as much as possible, avoiding officers and those crewmen not in on the secret; they slept with knives under their pillows and with chairs propped against their doors; they talked little, and waited to reach land in Halifax.



"That being your mother's wish, I see no reason we can't arrange interment with all her old copies of 'Gourmet.' "

MEANWHILE, Father Albano's letter concerning the first stowaway incident had reached the port police in Halifax, and they were ready for the Maersk Dubai: when it anchored, on May 24th, they boarded the ship and were able to escort Nicolae Pasca and the sailors who had hidden him onto land. At the Mission to Seamen, a collection of modest white trailers by the Halifax docks, television cameras recorded a riotous scene. There was Pasca, dazed and jubilant, bouncing among the sailors, who had tied bandannas around their faces, for they feared retribution from their employers. There were handshakes and claps on the back, and the cameras bobbing about in the crush. Back in the harbor, however, a standoff ensued. The remaining officers and crewmen refused to leave their ship. One officer, the radio operator—constitutionally a nervous man—finally leaped overboard and swam to a police boat. Cameramen captured him reaching up to the police, crying. After five days, the Romanian government filed an arrest warrant for the captain, the radio operator, and five other Taiwanese on charges of murder. According to a police source, Taiwan—which owns forty-eight per cent of the Yangming Corporation—had also been asked, through diplomatic channels, if it wanted to pursue the case, but it did not reply. Given the Romanian request and a go-ahead from the Canadian government, heavily armed police boarded the Dubai, removed the six other accused men, and brought them to jail to join the radio operator. The Dubai got new officers and a new crew, and sailed away.

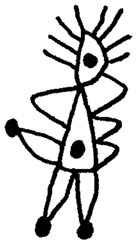
In sending the letter to Father Albano in Texas, the Filipino sailors had thought that their predicament would soon be resolved, either in Halifax or in the United States. (The next scheduled port of call was Newark.) They had an easy faith in the probity and the power of Western legal systems: they expected to give evidence and then return to their normal lives. For Canada, however, the Maersk Dubai case was not an opportunity for juridical truth-seeking; it was a diplomatic mess. Taiwan, which is Canada's tenth-largest trading partner, sought to have the trial—if there were to be one—held in its courts. Romania, whose trade dealings with Canada are negligible by comparison, also wanted to try the seven men, and pushed for extradition under an ancient treaty. But neither country had strong legal support for its position. Canada does not recognize Taiwan as a sovereign nation, and it is difficult to extradite people to a country that doesn't officially exist. And Romania's legal claim is highly suspect, mainly because the alleged crimes did not occur on Romanian soil, but also because Romania, like Canada, is party to the treaty that stipulates that high-seas crimes should be tried in the ship's flag state. Unfortunately, in this case the flag state is not quite a state.

Canada's position was also awkward from a moral standpoint. Even if the defendants could be extradited to Taiwan or to Romania, no one honestly believed that a fair trial would be likely in either country. Canada itself had no jurisdiction to try the case, because no crime had occurred in Canada, or had been committed against a Canadian. But something had clearly gone wrong on the Maersk Dubai, and Canada could not simply wash its hands of the business. The Canadian government's solution, according to most observers of the case, was—and still is—to push for extradition to Romania, but not to push too hard.

And so, much to the sailors' surprise, their public reception as heroes lasted only about three weeks. Canadian authorities explained to the seamen that anyone who wanted to testify would have to remain for the extradition hearing, which was set for September, and be cross-examined by the officers' defense attorneys. Most of the Filipinos in Halifax took their back pay and transportation money from the shipping company and left. Four stayed: the third engineer, Broas; the oiler, Ilagan; the able-bodied seaman Esteban; and the boatswain, Miguel. They had no income. An immigration lawyer advised them to apply for refugee status, and, at first, that notion puzzled them: they weren't refugees, they were witnesses. But as applicants for refugee status they would at least get the right to stay in Canada, and three hundred and ninety-nine Canadian dollars per month, which would enable them to stay long enough to testify. So the four sailors went on welfare, although back home in Manila they had houses and gardens, and even maids. Once the police completed their investigation, the four were placed in a grim hostel for transients, which they couldn't stand; they moved into two adjoining basement apartments in a broken-down building. They spent their time looking for work. Nova Scotia, they soon discovered, has one of the highest unemployment rates in Canada. (After several months of searching, they found temporary employment in a lobster-processing plant.)

The seven Taiwanese, by contrast, had the full support of their employer. The Yangming Corporation hired the best lawyers it could find—one for each accused—and Taiwan retained for itself Edward Greenspan, of Toronto, who is reputed to be among Canada's finest attorneys and is certainly one of its highest paid. In late June, the officers, now out on bail (ten thousand Canadian dollars apiece), moved into a pleasant block of suites in downtown Halifax. The company agreed to pay all their expenses, in addition to their full salaries, and to fly their wives over. The Taiwanese media came to ask gentle questions—whether the officers were liking Halifax, whether they were lonesome so far from Taiwan—which the officers gladly answered. To the non-Taiwanese media, they spoke only to declare their innocence. The Taipei papers featured articles on how expensive it is to feed stowaways and pay fines.

By midsummer, the four Filipino sailors were receiving disturbing reports from their families in Manila. Apparently, strange men were showing up at strange hours, and the wives had begun to get anonymous calls insisting that the husbands not testify. On August 27th, Esteban's dog was run over, and his wife was told that this had been done as an example. The week before, Miguel's wife had filed a police complaint, saying that two men had tried to abduct her. She wrote to Miguel, "Just be firm for the God that began His good works in you, He'll be faithful and able to fulfill it." One of Esteban's sons wrote his father not to buy N.B.A. cards for him, because they would be an unnecessary expense, and he added, "There are again car roaming around here. In this mourning at 4:00 A.M. there someone knocking at the door. Our life here is so risky." When the extradition hearing finally began, on September 3rd, the sailors announced that they couldn't testify until they were sure that their families were safe—preferably in Canada.



They had thought that this dramatic gesture would bring dramatic results, but they were wrong. The officers' attorneys immediately suggested that the sailors had simply wanted to emigrate all along—that they had made the charges against their officers in order to stimulate the sympathy of the Canadian state and attain a bright future for themselves in Canada. The sailors found this charge so incredible that they could barely register it. They didn't even *like* Canada, but, having sought refugee status, they could hardly say so. Canada was all they had left. Canada's Immigration Minister then denied their families' visa requests, *because* the sailors had applied for refugee status and therefore Canada could not be confident that their families would return to Manila. At that point, the sailors realized that in fact they were not considered essential to the extradition hearing—that the hearing could proceed without them. But they also realized that, without their testimony, the officers would almost certainly go free.

When I visited the four one evening in September, in the living room of a Filipino friend of theirs, I was struck by their courtesy. Only Broas, the engineer, seemed at ease, however: he perched on the piano bench and told sly jokes. The others had trouble keeping still. Esteban was either smoking on the front porch or sunk into an armchair, his ribs showing through his striped pullover when he breathed deeply. He was on tranquilizers but said he still had trouble sleeping. He said he was spending hours looking over clippings on the Taiwanese economy, trying to make sense of what had happened to him. He told me, vacant-eyed, that the begging stowaway had kissed his boots. And Miguel—still bulky, though he said he had lost weight—would get up suddenly to act out events of months ago. He would be briefly animated by memories, then go calm. His voice would be loud then fall to a whisper. At one moment, he grabbed his chest and said, "What these Taiwanese officers did to my life!" His voice went quiet, and he added, "Everything they've done until now, I never expected it." He said he thinks about the Romanians' families and then about his own. "It's like he said"—and he waved his arms at Broas, sitting quietly on the piano bench, who had earlier explained, in his cool, controlled way, "We are in a trap, between the families of the living and the families of the dead."

As the four witnesses waited in vain for their families to be allowed into Canada, the extradition hearing proceeded in Judge J. Michael MacDonald's windowless courtroom, in downtown Halifax, and a curious society developed there. In the public gallery, front and center, sat the seven detainees, tastefully dressed and appearing mild-mannered. Before them were their seven attorneys—a boisterous, expressive group, who formed a sort of high-spirited phalanx ever pressing down on the bent form of the Crown's prosecutor, James Martin, in the front row. A highly regarded attorney who was here acting on behalf of Romania, Martin gave the strong impression of wishing he were elsewhere. (Unlike the defense team, he wouldn't talk to the press.) Above and facing him sat the Judge, an unobtrusive, even hesitant man, rather new to the bench. Because this was an extradition hearing, there was no jury.

Once the fact-gathering is over, probably this month, the defense is likely to argue that the hearing should not have taken place at all. Taiwan's attorney will argue that Taiwan has jurisdiction, and will somehow finesse the question of his client's ethereal nationhood. Finally, Judge MacDonald will decide—perhaps in February—whether to recommend extradition of any of the officers. And so the case of the stowaways has not found its higher authority, as the four sailors on the Maersk Dubai once thought it would. Instead, the case is like a ship floating between countries, and it has drifted into MacDonald's courtroom only by chance. Nearly everyone following the case knows this, and knows, too, that the Canadian government will have opportunities to cast it off once more.

The four sailors don't want that to happen. It soon became clear to them that Canada would not let their families in, and that the defense, through

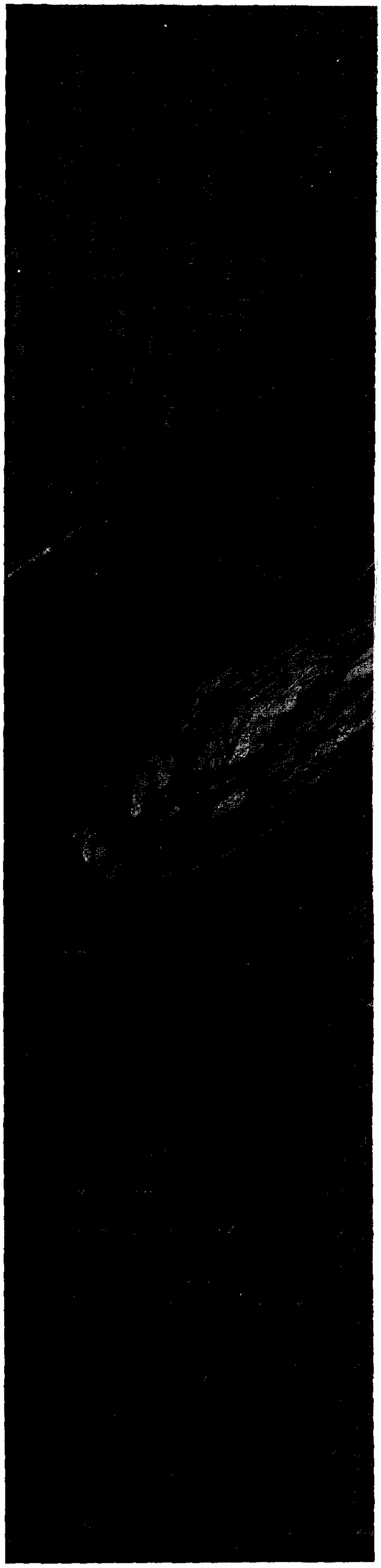
AT THE MUSEUMS

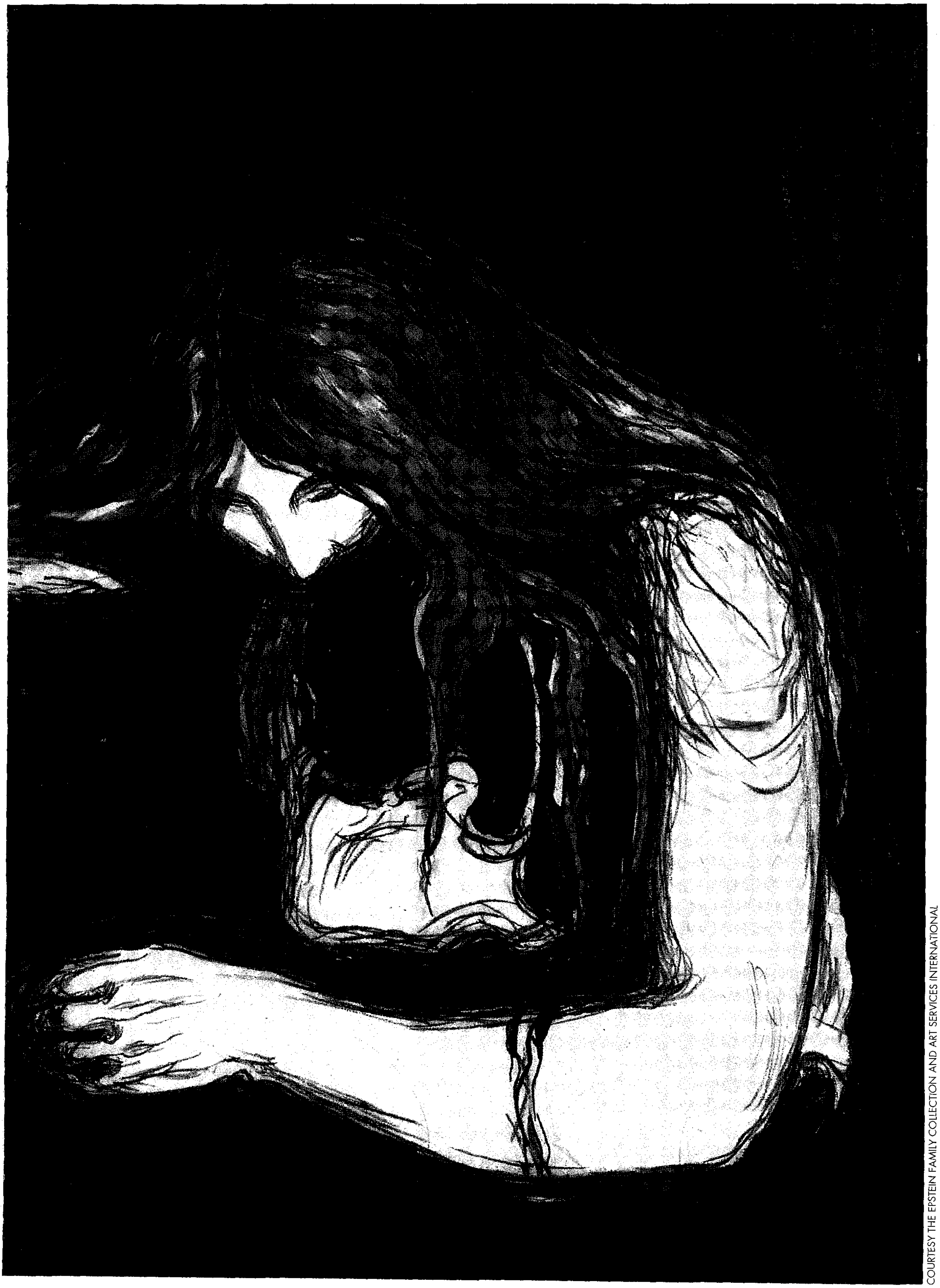
KISS AND TELL

EDVARD MUNCH (1863-1944) is in the midst of a rather odd revival. Inflatable plastic versions of his most famous work, "The Scream," are selling briskly in any number of toy and novelty stores. The recent Jasper Johns retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art included three paintings that took their titles and at least some of their inspiration from Munch's late self-portrait "Between the Clock and the Bed." And now a travelling exhibition of works on paper called "Munch and Women: Image and Myth," which opens at the San Diego Museum of Art on January 25th, sets out to rescue the Norwegian symbolist from the taint of misogyny.

Take "Vampire," one of the images long considered prime examples of Munch's less than friendly feelings toward women. When the oil painting on which this woodcut is based was first exhibited, in 1893, a catalogue entry informs us, it was called "Liebe und Schmerz" ("Love and Pain"); not until a year later, after a contemporary writer described the picture's subject as "a man broken in spirit; on his neck, the face of a biting vampire," did Munch decide to change the title. But what's really going on here? The man, from what you can see of him, looks more like a sufferer than a victim, and the woman's tenderly encircling arms hardly suggest blood lust. Other Munch paintings in which women do not seem to have men's best interests in mind ("Harpy" and "Death of Marat," for example) can presumably be reinterpreted in terms of the artist's general rather than gender-specific morbidity, but it may be that in the process they will lose some of their bite: Munch's paintings, like those of the German Expressionists for whom they served as a primary source, are more dependent on their titles than most artists might care to admit. Later on in his life, Munch told a biographer that the title "Vampire" was a literary conceit, and that in truth the picture "is just a woman kissing a man on the neck."

—CALVIN TOMKINS





COURTESY THE EPSTEIN FAMILY COLLECTION AND ART SERVICES INTERNATIONAL the media, was successfully planting doubts about their own honor. The sailors had gambled and lost. Their challenge to MacDonald's court had brought only contempt citations. So they arranged to hide their families, in Manila, as best they could. And, one by one, they agreed to tell their stories, upon which much of this account is based.

Juanito Ilagan, bright and cheerfully composed—he'd had a small career as a pop singer before going to sea—testified first. The defense attorneys saw that he couldn't be rattled, and kept their cross-examinations brief. Esmeraldo Esteban, with his shrunken frame and dark eyes, was a different story. The attorneys went on the offensive, unimpeded by the Crown's prosecutor, who generally left these four witnesses to fend for themselves. The defense would ask Esteban leading or sarcastic questions and scoff at the answers, muttering to one another contemptuously. Esteban responded with frank scorn, asking his cross-examiners why they kept repeating their questions and whether they wanted him to lie. He had no idea that talking back to attorneys during cross-examination is a serious breach of decorum. He later told me he thought he had done well in battle against a powerful foe in hostile territory, but he had mainly succeeded in alienating the court.

By the end of Esteban's testimony, the four witnesses—through what seemed almost like a series of accidents—had completed their journey from being treated like heroes to being treated like defendants. But the grilling that Esteban had received in court did not discourage Miguel. He still believed, as he told me, that he should testify, because then God might "release me," and because "I have a son, and maybe he will plan to be a good seaman," and because life at sea has to have rules. He continued, "If this happens all the time, there are so many ships, so many ships. I want to stop this, whatever happens, whatever the cost. I want to stop this, because this is the worst thing that ever happened in my life."

Miguel took the stand on October 23rd. On direct examination by the Crown, he repeated the story he had told since arriving in Halifax. When it came time for cross-examination, the defense insisted that Miguel testify largely in English—a language he does not know well. The Judge found this to be fair, as long as a Tagalog-speaking interpreter was present if needed. Before beginning, Miguel addressed the Judge. "I'm here not to prove something," he said. "I'm not here to lie. I'm here to stand and to stop the things that happened." He was, he said, "very much very coöperated."

The defense began in the person of Kevin Burke, a tall, gaunt man with a single expression—of mingled gravity and derision—and a mumbling delivery surpassed in its incomprehensibility only by Rodolfo Miguel's bad English. Burke was capable of acid phrasings, such as "If it were a mistake, Mr. Miguel, could you admit it?" He was not above badgering the witness, but his main technique was to state a series of events rapidly and then stop and stare at the witness as if a question had been asked which demanded a simple yes or no. One could see Miguel trying to follow the attorney's line of thought, trying to figure out which event in the series was the one his opponent really had in mind—that is, which one would later come to haunt him if he answered simply yes or no. Miguel knew that he was no match for Burke, just as he knew that Burke was hoping to fluster him into contradicting himself. To avoid this, Miguel would let the attorney finish whatever he was saying, and then, with apologies, give his own version of events. Miguel and the court were communicating in much the way a Third World sailor might communicate with a First World officer—in cobbled English and with a surplus of distrust. They only appeared to be speaking the same language.

The absurdity of this profound miscommunication—combined with the jocularity of the defense team, which Judge MacDonald did nothing to restrain—lent the courtroom a hysterical quality. It reached a climax late one afternoon after an exhausting day of cross-examination. Burke was trying to discredit Miguel's claim that he had ordered the building of the raft that carried off the first two stowaways; Burke sought to show—as some seamen had told the police in Halifax—that the captain or his chief officer had ordered it, thus proving that the officers did not intend to kill the two men. The attorney ran through a confusing series of events—Miguel coming onto the deck, seeing the stowaways and the seamen gathered by the pilot ladder—and asked Miguel to confirm their sequence.

Instead, Miguel described the scene in his own words: "When I came out to portside main deck, I saw my officers, the three officers, the chief officer and the second mate and the radio operator, continuously push this first stowaway. . . . I'm only see my chief officer, my second mate, and my radio operator continuous pushing, kicking this first stowaway." This was the scene that Miguel desperately wanted to impress upon the Court, the scene that he had relived so many times since March.

FALL IN NEW ENGLAND

The grass shrivels,
the birch tree senses its loneliness,
and the spiders hide in the fold of my nightgown.

Yesterday, on the stone terrace
in front of the sculptor's study,
I froze in the Nordic breath;
a sound of cold, long as a horn,
linked one hill to another.

Then the dogs came.
Black, gentle.
One of them put his head on my lap.
His head was heavy as a horse's head.

Blue, boreal flames completed the picture.

—Nina Cassian

The attorney returned to his own version of events, with some shades of difference, and Miguel gave the same reply. The attorney tried again, with the same result; and again, and this time Miguel said that he saw the sailors by the pilot ladder and "at that moment my chief officer and my second officer, my radio operator, kicking and pushing this person over the port side."

By this point, the six other defense attorneys were laughing. The accused Taiwanese, the captain's wife, a visiting Taiwanese prosecutor, and a supporter from the local Chinese community were all smiling.

The attorney tried a fifth time. Neither the prosecutor nor the Judge objected. Why were the able-bodied seamen already by the pilot ladder? "I don't know, sir," Miguel said. "Only I know they are already there. And my officers, chief officer and second officer and the radio operator continuously" (the attorney nodded, shook his head, said "Pushing") "pushing and kicking" (the attorney, dismissively, "All right") "this first stowaway over to the port-side pilot ladder."

By now, almost everyone in the courtroom was shaking with amusement—even the journalists were smiling. Miguel sat hunched in the witness stand, looking stricken. It was chilling in that moment to think that this hearing was the most objective, rigorous, and thoughtful examination the Dubai case would ever have.

THE next morning, the defense again returned to the story of the raft, but this time Miguel, when he spoke of kicking and pushing and shoving, began to weep. The defense moved on to another contention—that Miguel, far from being a hero, had helped force the stowaways onto the raft. This claim rested mainly on the statement of the third officer—the highest-ranking Filipino on the Maersk Dubai. He had told police that Miguel had threatened the stowaways by swinging an extension post and shouting. This time, the defense asked Miguel questions that could safely be answered by a yes or a no.

"Did you shout?"

"No, sir."

"Did you push the stowaways?"

"No, sir."

"Did you aim an extension post at the stowaways?"

"No, sir."

The attorney quoted from the third officer's deposition: "I saw the boatswain was forcing them to go down, and I know he is also following orders from the master. . . . Then this thing I saw again is the boatswain was holding this extension post and aiming to—because the older guy, he don't want to go down."

Miguel, his hands stuck deep in the pockets of his leather jacket, denied doing anything against the stowaways. He appeared calm. He patiently explained that the master—the captain—was on deck and that the second, older stowaway was begging him for his life. No one was smiling now in Judge MacDonald's courtroom, not even the defense attorneys. The accused Taiwanese were not smiling. Maybe they had fixed on that phrase "He is also following orders." Was this the best that their attorneys could do—argue that the captain had ordered a subordinate to force stowaways overboard, instead of doing it on his own?

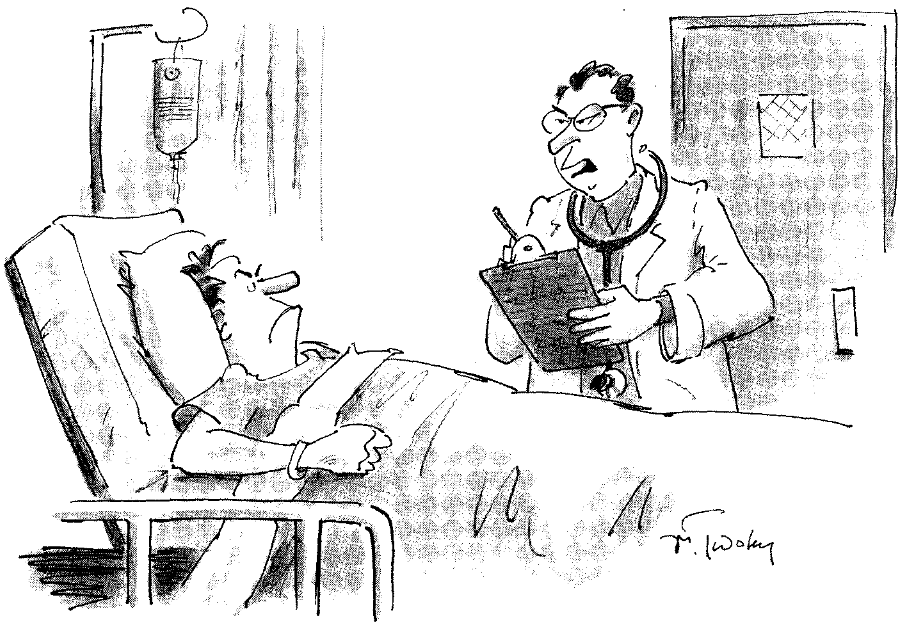
IN retrospect, I wonder whether Miguel wasn't thinking of himself as well as of Nicolae Pasca when he picked out Psalm 91 that day aboard the Dubai. "I will deliver him, and honor him," the passage reads. "With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation." Miguel, like everyone else on the ship, has his share of guilt to bear; certainly he was less of a hero than he would have wanted to be. Two men were put into the sea in March of last year. A third was probably killed in May. A fourth came along, giving every man on the Maersk Dubai a chance to redeem himself. Four sailors took that opportunity, and all that went with it, at the price of losing everything else in their lives. The rest did not.

"So many ships, so many ships," Miguel had said to me—so many ships, and so many stowaways hoping to sail to a new country. As David Garon, of Canada's shipping federation, remarked to me, "There are a hundred million people homeless in the world, and they have to get somewhere." Industry representatives, customs and immigration officials, and the United Nations' International Maritime Organization are trying both to make stowing away more difficult and to find a means of making criminal laws apply more readily at sea. The I.M.O. has been drafting a code that should make high-seas crimes easier to prosecute, and perhaps someday an adequate number of countries will ratify it and abide by it. In the meantime, sailors will have to weigh the risks of bearing witness for themselves.

After a day of Miguel's testimony, Esmeraldo Esteban came by my hotel room. He looked worn out. He talked about his hopes of going to sea again. It's a good job. There is nothing else he wants to do. We shared a beer and gazed out the window at the citadel that once defended Halifax.

I asked Esteban whether, knowing what he knew now, he would have agreed to testify. "No" was his reply. And if he were to witness another crime someday?

"I will look the other way." ♦



"That liver went to someone who doesn't have such a big yap."

FICTION

ANOTHER WAY TO DIE

Last orders of a Japanese officer in Manchuria, during the final moments of the Second World War.

BY HARUKI MURAKAMI

A Japanese veterinarian woke before 6 A.M. Most of the animals in the Hsin-ching zoo were already awake. The open window let in their cries and the breeze that carried their smells, which told him the weather without his having to look outside. This was part of his routine here in Manchuria: he would listen, then inhale the morning air, and so ready himself for each new day.

Today, however, should have been different from the day before. It *had* to be different. So many voices and smells had been lost! The tigers, the leopards, the wolves, the bears: all had been liquidated—eliminated—by a Japanese squad the previous afternoon to avoid the animals' escaping as the city came under Russian attack. Now, after some hours of sleep, those events seemed to him like part of a sluggish nightmare he had had long ago. But he knew they had actually happened. His ears still felt a dull ache from the roar of the soldiers' rifles; that could not be a dream. It was August now, the year 1945, and he was here in the city of Hsin-ching, in Japanese-held Manchuria; Soviet troops had burst across the border and were pressing closer every hour. This was reality—as real as the sink and toothbrush he saw in front of him.

The sound of the elephants' trumpeting gave him some sense of relief. Ah, yes—the elephants had survived. Fortunately, the young lieutenant in charge of yesterday's action had had enough normal human sensitivity to remove the elephants from the list, the veterinarian thought as he washed his face. Since coming to Manchuria, he had met any number of stiff-necked, fanatical young officers from his homeland, and the experience always left him shaken. Most of them were farmers' sons who had spent their youthful years in the depressed nineteen-thirties, steeped in the tragedies of poverty while a megalomaniac nationalism was hammered into their skulls. They would follow the orders of a superior without a second thought, no matter how outlandish. If they were commanded, in the name of the Emperor, to dig a hole through the earth to Brazil, they would grab a shovel and set to work. Some people called this "purity," but the veterinarian had other words for it. As an urban doctor's son, educated in the relatively liberal atmosphere of Japan in the twenties, the veterinarian could never understand those young officers. Shooting a couple of elephants should have been a simpler assignment than digging through the earth to Brazil, but yesterday's lieutenant, though he spoke with a slight country accent, seemed to be a more normal human being than other officers were—better educated and more reasonable. The veterinarian could sense this from the way the young man spoke and handled himself.

In any case, the elephants had not been killed, and the veterinarian told himself that he should probably be grateful. The soldiers, too, must have been glad to be spared the task. The Chinese workers may have regretted the omission—they had missed out on a lot of meat and ivory.

The veterinarian boiled water in a kettle, soaked his beard in a hot towel, and shaved. Then he ate breakfast alone: tea, toast, and butter. The food rations in Manchuria were far from sufficient, but compared with those elsewhere they were still fairly generous. This was good news both for him and for the animals. The animals showed resentment at their reduced allotments of feed, but the situation here was better than in zoos back in the Japanese homeland, where food supplies had already bottomed out. No one could predict the future, but for now, at least, both animals and humans were spared the pain of extreme hunger.

He wondered how his wife and daughter were doing. They had left for Japan a few days earlier, and if all went according to plan their train should have reached the Korean coast by now. There they would board the transport ship that would carry them home to Japan. The doctor missed seeing them when he woke up in the morning. He missed hearing their lively voices as they prepared breakfast. A hollow quiet ruled the house. This was no longer the home he loved, the place where he belonged. And yet, at the same time, he could not help feeling a certain strange joy at being left alone in this empty official residence; now he was able to sense the implacable power of fate in his very bones and flesh.

Fate itself was the veterinarian's own fatal disease. From his youngest days, he had had a weirdly lucid awareness that "I, as an individual, am living under the control of some outside force." Most of the time, the power of fate played on like a quiet and monotonous ground bass, coloring only the edges of his life. Rarely was he reminded of its existence. But every once in a while the balance would shift and the force would increase, plunging him into a state of near-paralytic resignation. He knew from experience that nothing he could do or think would ever change the situation.

Not that he was a passive creature; indeed, he was more decisive than most, and he always saw his decisions through. In his profession, too, he was outstanding: a veterinarian of exceptional skill, a tireless educator. He was certainly no fatalist, as most people use the word. And yet never had he experienced the unshakable certainty that he had arrived at a decision entirely on his own. He always had the sense that fate had forced him to decide things to suit its own convenience. On occasion, after the momentary satisfaction of having decided something of his own free will, he would see that things had been decided beforehand by an external power cleverly camouflaged as free will, mere bait thrown in his path to lure him into behaving as he was meant to. He felt like a titular head of state who did nothing more than impress the royal seal on documents at the behest of a regent who wielded all true power in the realm—like the Emperor of this puppet empire of Manchukuo.

Now, left behind in his residence at the zoo, the veterinarian was alone with his fate. And it was fate above all, the gigantic power of fate, that held sway here—not the Kwantung Army, not the Soviet Army, not the troops of the Chinese Communists or of the Kuomintang. Anyone could see that fate was the ruler here, and that individual will counted for nothing. It was fate that had spared the elephants and buried the tigers and leopards and wolves and bears the day before. What would it bury now, and what would it spare? These were questions that no one could answer.

The veterinarian left his residence to prepare for the morning feeding. He assumed that no one would show up for work anymore, but he found two Chinese boys waiting for him in his office. He did not know them. They were thirteen or fourteen years old, dark-complexioned and skinny, with roving animal eyes. "They told us to help you," one boy said. The doctor nodded. He asked their names, but they made no reply. Their faces remained blank, as if they had not heard the question. These boys had obviously been sent by the Chinese people who had worked here until the day before. Those people had probably ended all contact with the Japanese now, in anticipation of a new regime, but assumed that children would not be held accountable. The boys had been sent as a sign of good will—the workers knew that he could not care for the animals alone.

The veterinarian gave each boy two cookies, then put them to work helping him feed the animals. They led a mule-drawn cart from cage to cage, providing each animal with its particular feed and changing its water. Cleaning the cages was out of the question. The best they could manage was a quick hose-down, to wash away the droppings.

They started the work at eight o'clock and finished after ten. The boys then disappeared without a word. The veterinarian felt exhausted from the hard physical labor. He went back to the office and reported to the zoo director that the animals had been fed.

JUST before noon, the young lieutenant came back to the zoo leading the same eight soldiers he had brought the day before. Fully armed again, they walked with a metallic clinking that could be heard far in advance of their arrival. Their shirts were blackened with sweat. Cicadas were screaming in the trees, as they had been yesterday. Today, however, the soldiers had not come to kill animals. The lieutenant saluted the director and said, "We need to know the current status of the zoo's usable carts and draft animals." The director informed him that the zoo had exactly one mule and one wagon. "We contributed our only truck and two horses two weeks ago," he noted. The lieutenant nodded and announced that he would immediately commandeer the mule and wagon, as per orders of Kwantung Army Headquarters.

"Wait just a minute," the veterinarian interjected. "We need those to feed the animals twice a day. All our local people have disappeared. Without that mule and wagon, our animals will starve to death. Even with them, we can barely keep up."

"We're all just barely keeping up, sir," said the lieutenant, whose eyes were red and whose face was covered with stubble. "Our first priority is to defend the city. You can always let the animals out of their cages if need be. We've taken care of the dangerous carnivores. The others pose no security risk. These are military orders, sir. You'll just have to manage as you see fit."

Cutting the discussion short, the lieutenant had his men take the mule and wagon. When they were gone, the veterinarian and the director looked at each other. The director sipped his tea, shook his head, and said nothing.

Four hours later, the soldiers were back with the mule and wagon, a filthy canvas tarpaulin covering the mounded contents of the wagon. The mule was panting, its hide foaming with the afternoon heat and the weight of the load. The eight soldiers marched four Chinese men ahead of them at bayonet point—young men, perhaps twenty years old, wearing baseball uniforms and with their hands tied behind their backs. Black-and-blue marks on their faces made it obvious that they had been severely beaten. The right eye of one man was swollen almost shut, and the bleeding lips of another had stained his baseball shirt bright red. The shirtfronts had nothing written on them, but there were small rectangles where the name patches had been torn off. The numbers on their backs were 1, 4, 7, and 9. The veterinarian could not begin to imagine why, at such a time of crisis, four young Chinese men would be wearing baseball uniforms or why they had been so badly beaten and dragged here by Japanese troops. The scene looked like something not of this world—a painting by a mental patient.

The lieutenant asked the zoo director if he had any picks and shovels he could let them use. The young officer looked even more pale and haggard than he had before. The veterinarian led him and his men to a toolshed behind the office. The lieutenant chose two picks and two shovels for his men. Then he asked the veterinarian to come with him and, leaving his men there, walked into a thicket beyond the road. The veterinarian followed. Wherever the lieutenant walked, huge grasshoppers scattered. The smell of summer grass hung in the air. Mixed in with the deafening screams of cicadas, the sharp trumpeting of elephants now and then seemed to sound a distant warning.

The lieutenant went on among the trees without speaking, until he found a kind of opening in the woods. The area had been slated for construction of a plaza for small animals that children could play with. The plan had been postponed indefinitely, however, when the worsening military situation made construction materials scarce. The trees had been cleared away to make a circle of bare ground, and the sun illuminated this one part of the woods like stage lighting. The lieutenant stood in the center of the circle and scanned the area. Then he dug at the ground with the heel of his boot.

"We're going to bivouac here for a while," he said, kneeling down and scooping up a handful of dirt.

The veterinarian nodded in response. He had no idea why they had to bivouac

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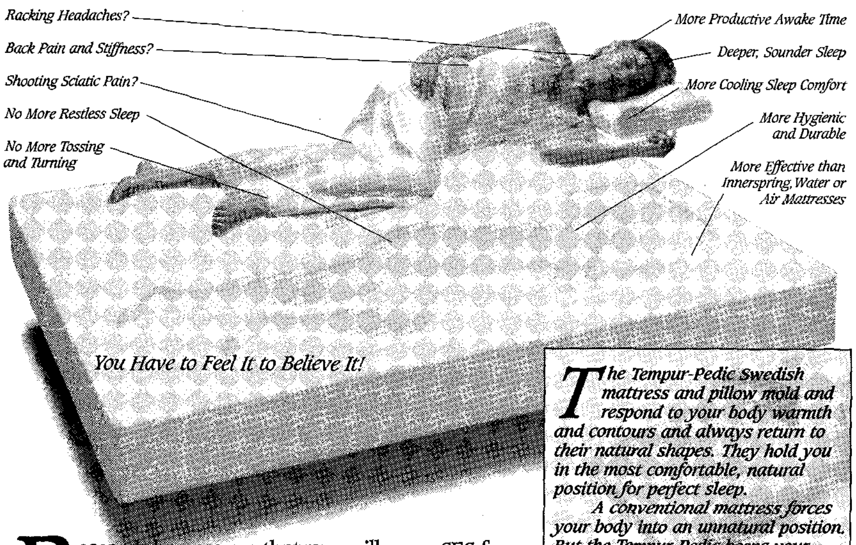
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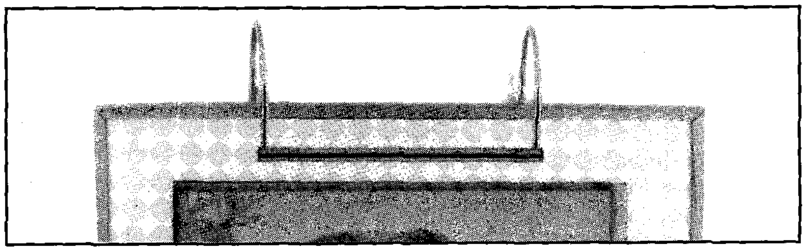

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in a zoo, but he decided not to ask. Here in Hsin-ching, experience had taught him never to question military men. Questions did nothing but make them angry, and they never gave you a straight answer in any case.

"First we dig a big hole here," the lieutenant said, speaking as if to himself. He stood up and took a pack of cigarettes from his shirt pocket. Putting a cigarette between his lips, he offered one to the doctor, then lit both with a match. The two concentrated on their smoking to fill the silence. Again the lieutenant began digging at the ground with his boot. He drew a kind of diagram in the earth, then rubbed it out. Finally, he asked the veterinarian, "Where were you born?"

"In Kanagawa," the doctor said. "In a town called Ofuna, near the sea, an hour or two from Tokyo."

The lieutenant nodded.

"And where were you born?" the veterinarian asked.

Instead of answering, the lieutenant narrowed his eyes and watched the smoke rising from between his fingers. No, it never pays to ask a military man questions, the veterinarian told himself again. They like to ask questions, but they'll never give you an answer. They wouldn't give you the time of day—literally.

"There's a movie studio there," the lieutenant said.

It took the veterinarian a few seconds to realize the lieutenant was talking about Ofuna. "That's right. A big studio. I've never been inside, though."

The lieutenant dropped what was left of his cigarette on the ground and crushed it out. "I hope you make it back there," he said. "Of course, there's an ocean to cross between here and Japan. We'll probably all die over here." He kept his eyes on the ground as he spoke. "Tell me, Doctor, are you afraid of death?"

"I guess it depends on how you die," the veterinarian said after a moment's thought.

The lieutenant raised his eyes and looked at the veterinarian as if his curiosity had been aroused. He had apparently been expecting another answer. "You're right," he said. "It does depend on how you die."

The two remained silent for a time. The lieutenant looked as if he might just fall asleep there standing up. He was obviously exhausted. An especially large grasshopper flew over them like a bird and disappeared into a distant clump of grass with a noisy beating of wings. The lieutenant glanced at his watch.

"Time to get started," he said to no one in particular. Then he spoke to the veterinarian. "I'd like you to stay around for a while. I might have to ask you to do me a favor."

The veterinarian nodded.

THE soldiers led the Chinese prisoners to the opening in the woods and untied their hands. The corporal drew a large circle on the ground using a baseball bat—why a soldier would have a bat the veterinarian found another mystery—and ordered the prisoners, in Japanese, to dig a deep hole the size of the circle. With the picks and shovels, the four men in baseball uniforms started digging in silence. Half the Japanese squad stood guard over them while the other half stretched out beneath the trees. They seemed to be in desperate need of sleep; no sooner had they hit the ground in full gear than they began snoring. The four soldiers who remained awake kept watch over the digging nearby, rifles resting on their hips, bayonets fixed, ready for immediate use. The lieutenant and the corporal took turns overseeing the work and napping under the trees.

It took less than an hour for the four Chinese prisoners to dig a hole some twelve feet across and deep enough to come up to their necks. One of the men asked for water, speaking in Japanese. The lieutenant nodded, and a soldier brought a bucket full of water. The four Chinese took turns ladling water from the bucket and gulping it down with obvious relish. They drank almost the entire bucketful. Their uniforms were smeared black with blood, mud, and sweat.

The lieutenant had two of the soldiers pull the wagon over to the hole. The corporal yanked the tarpaulin off, to reveal four dead men piled in the wagon. They wore the same baseball uniforms as the prisoners, and they, too, were obviously Chinese. They appeared to have been shot, and their uniforms were covered with black bloodstains. Large flies were beginning to swarm over the corpses. Judging from the way the blood had dried, the doctor guessed that they had been dead for close to twenty-four hours.

The lieutenant ordered the four Chinese who had dug the hole to throw the bodies into it. Without a word, faces blank, the men took the bodies out of the wagon and threw them, one at a time, into the hole. Each corpse landed with a dull thud. The numbers on the dead men's uniforms were 2, 5, 6, and 8. The veterinarian committed them to memory.

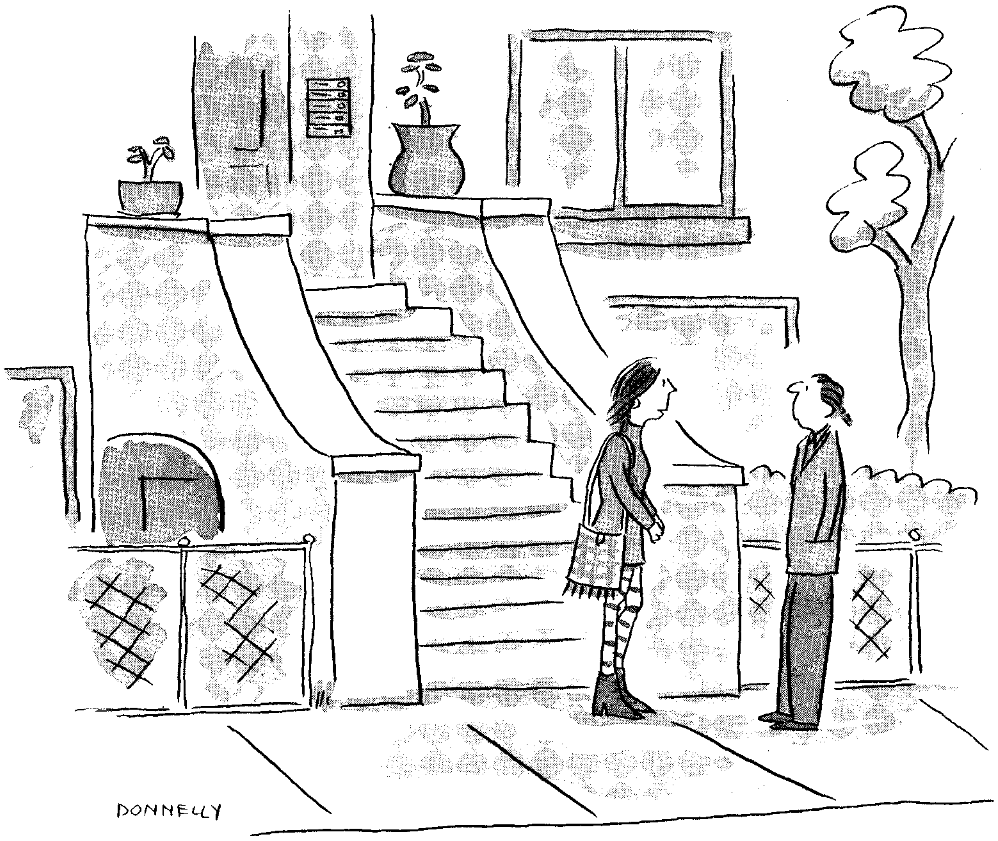
When the four Chinese had finished throwing the bodies into the hole, the soldiers tied each man to a nearby tree. The lieutenant held up his wrist and studied his watch with a grim expression. Then he looked up toward a spot in the sky for a while, as if searching for something there. He looked like a stationmaster standing on the platform and waiting for a hopelessly overdue train. But in fact he was looking at nothing at all. He was just allowing a certain amount of time to go by. Once he had accomplished that, he turned to the corporal and gave him curt orders to bayonet three of the four prisoners—Nos. 1, 7, and 9.

Three soldiers were chosen and took up their positions in front of the three Chinese. The soldiers looked paler than the men they were about to kill. The Chinese looked too tired to hope for anything. The corporal offered each of them a smoke, but they refused. He put his cigarettes back into his shirt pocket.

Taking the veterinarian with him, the lieutenant went to stand somewhat apart from the other soldiers. "You'd better watch this," he said. "This is another way to die."

The veterinarian nodded. The lieutenant is not saying this to me, he thought. He's saying it to himself.

In a gentle voice, the lieutenant explained, "Shooting them would be the simplest and most efficient way to kill them, but we have orders not to waste a single bullet—and certainly not to waste bullets killing Chinese. We're supposed to save our ammunition for the Rus-



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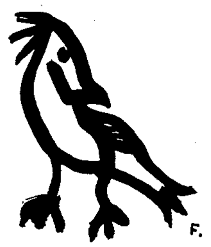
sians. We'll just bayonet them, I suppose, but that's not as easy as it sounds. By the way, Doctor, did they teach you how to use a bayonet in the Army?"

The doctor explained that, as a cavalry veterinarian, he had not been trained to use a bayonet.

"Well, the proper way to kill a man with a bayonet is this: First, you thrust it in under the ribs—here." The lieutenant pointed to his own torso just above the stomach. "Then you drag the point in a big, deep circle inside him to scramble the organs. Then you thrust upward to puncture the heart. You can't just stick it in and expect him to die. We soldiers have this drummed into us. Hand-to-hand combat using bayonets ranks right up there along with night assaults as the pride of the Imperial Army—though mainly it's a lot cheaper than tanks and planes and cannons. Of course, you can train all you want, but finally what you're stabbing is a straw doll, not a live human being. It doesn't bleed or scream or spill its guts on the ground. These soldiers have never actually killed a human being that way. And neither have I."



The lieutenant looked at the corporal and gave him a nod. The corporal barked his order to the three soldiers, who snapped to attention. Then they took a half step back and thrust out their bayonets, each man aiming his blade at his prisoner. One of the young men (No. 7) growled something in Chinese that sounded like a curse and gave a defiant spit—which never reached the ground but dribbled down the front of his baseball uniform.

At the sound of the next order, the three soldiers thrust their bayonets into the Chinese men with tremendous force. Then, as the lieutenant had said, they twisted the blades so as to rip the men's internal organs, and thrust the tips upward. The cries of the Chinese men were not very loud—more like deep sobs than like screams, as if they were heaving out the breath left in their bodies all at once through a single opening. The soldiers pulled out their bayonets and stepped back. The corporal barked his order again, and the men repeated the procedure exactly as before—stabbing, twisting, thrusting upward, withdrawing. The veterinarian watched in numbed silence, overtaken by the sense that he was beginning to split in two. He became simultaneously the stabber and the stabbed. He could feel both the impact of the bayonet as it entered his victim's body and the pain of having his internal organs slashed to bits.

It took much longer than he would have imagined for the Chinese men to die. Their sliced-up bodies poured prodigious amounts of blood on the ground, but, even with their organs shredded, they went on twitching slightly for quite some time. The corporal used his own bayonet to cut the ropes that bound the men to the trees, and then he had the soldiers who had not participated in the killing help drag the fallen bodies to the hole and throw them in. These corpses also made a dull thud on impact, but the doctor couldn't help feeling that the sound was different from that made by the earlier corpses—probably because these were not entirely dead yet.

Now only the young Chinese prisoner with the number 4 on his shirt was left. The three pale-faced soldiers tore broad leaves from plants at their feet and proceeded to wipe their bloody bayonets. Not only blood but strange-colored body fluids and chunks of flesh adhered to the blades. The men had to use many leaves to return the bayonets to their original bare-metal shine.

The veterinarian wondered why only the one man, No. 4, had been left alive, but he was not going to ask questions. The lieutenant took out another cigarette and lit up. He then offered a smoke to the veterinarian, who accepted it in silence and, after putting it between his lips, struck his own match. His hand did not tremble, but it seemed to have lost all feeling, as if he were wearing thick gloves.

"These men were cadets in the Manchukuo Army Officer Candidate School," the lieutenant said. "They refused to participate in the defense of Hsin-ching. They killed two of their Japanese instructors last night and tried to run away. We caught them during night patrol, killed four of them on the spot, and captured the other four. Two more escaped in the dark." The lieutenant rubbed his beard with the palm of his hand. "They were trying to make their getaway in baseball uniforms. I guess they figured they'd be arrested as deserters if they wore their military uniforms. Or maybe they were afraid of what Communist troops would do to them if they were caught in their Manchukuo uniforms. Anyway, all they had in their barracks to wear besides their cadet outfits were uniforms of the O.C.S. baseball team. So they tore off the names and tried to get away wearing these. I don't know if you know, but the school had a great team. They used to go to Taiwan and Korea for friendship games. That guy"—and here the lieutenant motioned toward the man tied to the tree—"was captain of the team and batted cleanup. We think he was the one who organized the getaway, too. He killed the two instructors with a bat. The instructors knew there was trouble in the barracks and weren't going to distribute weapons to the cadets until it was an absolute emergency. But they forgot about the baseball bats. Both of them had their skulls cracked open. They probably died instantly. Two perfect home runs. This is the bat."

The lieutenant had the corporal bring the bat to him. He passed the bat to the veterinarian. The doctor took it in both hands and held it up in front of his face, the way a player stepping into the batter's box does. It was just an ordinary bat, not very well made, with a rough finish and an uneven grain. It was heavy, though, and well broken in. The handle was black with sweat. It didn't look like a bat that had been used recently to kill two human beings. After getting a feel for its weight, the veterinarian handed it back to the lieutenant, who gave it a few easy swings, handling it like an expert.

"Do you play baseball?" the lieutenant asked the veterinarian.

"All the time when I was a kid."

"Too grown up now?"

"No more baseball for me," the veterinarian said, and he was on the verge of asking "How about you, lieutenant?" but he swallowed the words.

"I've been ordered to beat this guy to death with the same bat he used," the lieutenant said in a dry voice as he tapped the ground with the tip of the bat. "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. Just between you and me, I think the order stinks. What the hell good is it going to do to kill these guys? We don't have any planes left, we don't have any warships, our best troops are dead. Just the other day some kind of special new bomb wiped out the whole city of Hiroshima in a split second. Either we're going to be swept out of Manchuria or we'll all be killed, and China will belong to the Chinese again. We've already killed a lot of Chinese, and adding a few bodies to the count isn't going to make any difference. But orders are orders. I'm a soldier and I have to follow orders. We killed the tigers and leopards yesterday, and today we have to kill these guys. So take a good look, Doctor. This is another way for people to die. You're a doctor, so you're probably used to knives and blood and guts, but you've probably never seen anyone beaten to death with a baseball bat."

The lieutenant ordered the corporal to bring player No. 4, the cleanup batter, to the edge of the hole. Once again they tied his hands behind his back, then blindfolded him and had him kneel down on the ground. He was a tall, strongly built young man with massive arms the size of most people's thighs. The lieutenant called over one young soldier and handed him the bat. "Kill him with this," he said. The young soldier stood at attention and saluted before taking the bat, but having taken it in his hands he just went on standing there as if stupefied. He seemed unable to grasp the concept of beating a Chinese man to death with a baseball bat.

"Have you ever played baseball?" the lieutenant asked the young soldier.

"No, sir, never," the soldier replied in a loud voice. Both the village in Hokkaido where he was born and the village in Manchuria where he grew up had been so poor that no family in either place could have afforded the luxury of a baseball or a bat. He had spent his boyhood running around the fields, catching dragonflies and playing at sword fighting with sticks. He had never in his life played baseball, or even seen a game. This was the first time he had ever held a bat.

The lieutenant showed him how to hold the bat and taught him the basics of the swing, demonstrating a few times himself. "See? It's all in the hips," he grunted through clenched teeth. "Start-

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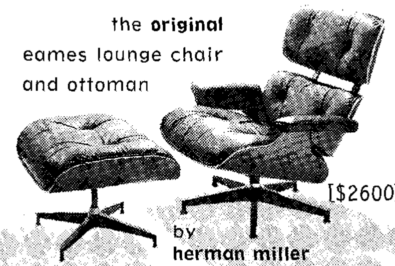

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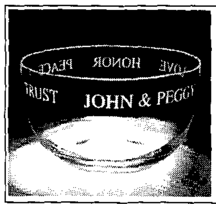

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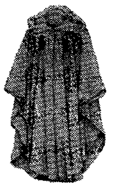

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ing from the backswing, you twist from the waist down. The tip of the bat follows through naturally. Understand? If you concentrate too much on swinging the bat, your arms do all the work and you lose power. Swing from the hips."

The soldier didn't seem fully to comprehend the lieutenant's instructions, but he took off his heavy gear as ordered and practiced his swing for a while. Everyone was watching him. The lieutenant placed his hands over the soldier's to help him adjust his grip. He was a good teacher. Before long, the soldier's swing, though somewhat awkward, was swishing through the air. What the young soldier lacked in skill he made up for in muscle power, having spent his days working on the farm.

"That's good enough," the lieutenant said, using his hat to wipe the sweat from his brow. "O.K., now try to do it in one good, clean swing. Don't let him suffer."

What he really wanted to say was "I don't want to do this any more than you do. Who the hell could have thought of anything so stupid? Killing a guy with a baseball bat . . ." But an officer could never say such a thing to an enlisted man.

The soldier stepped up behind the blindfolded Chinese man where he knelt on the ground. When the soldier raised the bat, the strong rays of the setting sun cast its long, thick shadow on the earth. This is so weird, the veterinarian thought. The lieutenant's right: I've never seen a man killed with a baseball bat. The young soldier held the bat aloft for a long time. The veterinarian saw its tip shaking.

The lieutenant nodded to the soldier. With a deep breath, the soldier took a backswing, then smashed the bat with all his strength into the back of the Chinese cadet's head. He did it amazingly well. He swung his hips exactly as the lieutenant had taught him to, the brand of the bat made a direct hit behind the man's ear, and the bat followed through perfectly. There was a dull crushing sound as the skull shattered. The man himself made no sound. His body hung in the air for a moment in a strange pose, then flopped forward. He lay with his cheek on the ground, blood flowing from one ear. He did not move. The lieutenant looked at his watch. Still gripping the bat, the young soldier stared off into space, his mouth agape.

The lieutenant was a person who did things with great care. He waited for a full minute. When he was certain that the Chinese man was not moving at all, he said to the veterinarian, "Could you do me a favor and check to see that he's really dead?"

The veterinarian nodded, walked over to where the young Chinese lay, and knelt down and removed his blindfold. The man's eyes were open wide, the pupils turned upward, and bright-red blood was flowing from his ear. His half-opened mouth revealed the tongue lying tangled inside. The impact had left his neck twisted at a strange angle. The man's nostrils had expelled thick gobs of blood, making black stains on the dry ground. One particularly alert—and large—fly had already burrowed its way into a nostril to lay eggs. Just to make sure, the veterinarian took the man's wrist and felt for a pulse. There was no pulse—certainly not where there was supposed to be one. The young soldier had ended this burly man's life with a single swing of a bat—indeed, his first-ever swing of a bat. The veterinarian glanced toward the lieutenant and nodded, to signal that the man was, without a doubt, dead. Having completed his assigned task, he was beginning slowly to rise to his full height when it seemed to him that the sun shining on his back suddenly increased in intensity.

At that very moment, the young Chinese batter in uniform No. 4 rose up into a sitting position as if he had just come fully awake. Without the slightest uncertainty or hesitation—or so it seemed to those watching—he grabbed the doctor's wrist. It all happened in a split second. The veterinarian could not understand; this man was dead, he was sure of it. But now, thanks to one last drop of life that seemed to well up out of nowhere, the man was gripping the veterinarian's wrist with the strength of a steel vise. Eyelids stretched open to the limit, pupils still glaring upward, the man fell forward into the hole, dragging the doctor in after him. The doctor fell in on top of him and heard the man's ribs crack as his weight came down. Still the Chinese ballplayer continued to grip his wrist. The soldiers saw all this happening, but they were too stunned to do anything more than stand and watch. The lieutenant recovered first and leaped into the hole. He drew his pistol from his holster, set the muzzle against the Chinese man's head, and pulled the trigger twice. Two sharp, overlapping cracks rang out, and a large black hole opened in the man's temple. Now his life was completely gone, but still he refused to release the doctor's wrist. The lieutenant knelt down and, pistol in one hand, began the painstaking process of prying open the corpse's fingers one at a time. The veterinarian lay there in the hole, surrounded by eight silent Chinese corpses in baseball uniforms. Down in the hole, the screeching of cicadas sounded very different from the way it sounded above ground.

Once the veterinarian had been freed from the dead man's grasp, the soldiers pulled him and the lieutenant out of the grave. The veterinarian squatted down on the grass and took several deep breaths. Then he looked at his wrist. The man's fingers had left five bright-red marks. On this hot August afternoon, the veterinarian felt chilled to the core of his body. I'll never get rid of this coldness again, he thought. That man was truly, seriously trying to take me with him wherever he was going.

The lieutenant reset the pistol's safety and carefully slipped the gun into its holster. This was the first time he had ever fired a gun at a human being. But he tried not to think about it. The war would continue for a little while at least, and people would continue to die. He could leave the deep thinking for later. He wiped his sweaty right palm on his pants, then ordered the soldiers who had not participated in the execution to fill in the hole. A huge swarm of flies had already taken custody of the pile of corpses.

The young soldier went on standing where he was, stupefied, gripping the bat. He couldn't seem to make his hands let go. The lieutenant and the corporal left him alone. He had seemed to be watching the whole bizarre series of events—the "dead" Chinese suddenly grabbing the veterinarian by the wrist, their falling into the grave, the lieutenant's leaping in and finishing him off, and now the other soldiers' filling in the hole. But in fact he had not been watching any of it. He had been listening to a bird in a tree somewhere making a "*Creeeak! Creeeak!*" sound as if winding a spring. The soldier looked up, trying to pinpoint the direction of the cries, but he could see no sign of the windup bird. He felt a slight sense of nausea at the back of his throat.

As he listened to the winding of the spring, the young soldier saw one fragmentary image after another rise up before him and fade away. After the Japanese were disarmed by the Soviets, the lieutenant would be handed over to the Chinese and hanged for his responsibility in these executions. The corporal would die of the plague in a Siberian concentration camp: he would be thrown into a quarantine shed and left there until dead, though in fact he had merely collapsed from malnutrition and had not contracted the plague—not, at least, until he was thrown into the shed. The veterinarian would die in an accident a year later: a civilian, he would be taken by the Soviets for coöperating with the military and sent to another Siberian camp to do hard labor; he would be working in a deep shaft of a Siberian coal mine when a flood would drown him along with many soldiers. And I, thought the young soldier with the bat in his hands—but he could not see his own future. He could not even see as real the events that were happening before his very eyes. He closed his eyes now and listened to the call of the windup bird.

Then, all at once, he thought of the ocean—the ocean he had seen from the deck of the ship bringing him from Japan to Manchuria eight years earlier. He had never seen the ocean before, nor had he seen it since. He could still remember the smell of the salt air. The ocean was one of the greatest things he had ever seen in his life—bigger and deeper than anything he had imagined. It changed its color and shape and expression according to time and place and weather. It aroused a deep sadness in his heart, and at the same time it brought his heart peace and comfort. Would he ever see it again? He loosened his grip and let the bat fall to the ground. It made a dry sound as it struck the earth. After the bat left his hands, he felt a slight increase in his nausea.

The windup bird went on crying, but no one else could hear its call. ♦

(*Translated, from the Japanese, by Jay Rubin.*)

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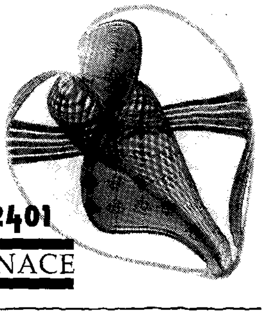

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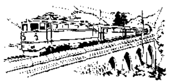

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THE THEATRE

IT'S RAGTIME AGAIN

Doctorow's tapestry of a century in motion comes to the stage.

BY JOHN LAHR

THE novelist E. L. Doctorow can't bow. He may write like an angel, but he bows like an undertaker. He sort of davens from the shoulders up. At the finale of the world première of the musical adaptation of his exuberant historical fantasia "Ragtime" (1975), on December 8th, Doctorow was led from the wings by the Canadian impresario Garth Drabinsky, to join the cast and the rest of the collaborators on the stage of the behemoth Apotex Theatre, in North York, Ontario, which is on the outskirts of Toronto. Here, with eighteen hundred people standing and cheering for a full five minutes (the lights in the auditorium finally had to be turned off to get them to stop), Doctorow, in tuxedo and spectacles, was alternately trying to ape the cast's curtain calls and to keep from crying—the latter a battle that most of the audience had fought and lost many minutes before. Everything about "Ragtime" is big—a big cast, a big concept, a big roll of the dice, and, to my mind, a big victory for musical-theatre collaboration.

"Ragtime" the novel is a tapestry of fiction and fact—a kind of historical vaudeville, with Harry Houdini, Booker T. Washington, Emma Goldman, J. P. Morgan, Henry Ford, and Evelyn Nesbit among the starring performers. Doctorow's playful, freewheeling storytelling, which follows the trajectories of a black man, an immigrant, and a mainstream Wasp family as they are thrown about in the turbulent wake of American history, suits the artifice of musical theatre better than the naturalism of film; indeed, the musical allows "Ragtime" a magnificent rebirth after the disappointment of the 1981 Milos Forman film version. It's a cracking story, and Terrence McNally's clever adaptation honors its spirit. "Ragtime" the musical, in its rich characterizations and its attention to the complex plots of American lives, also signals a growing rejection of the American musical's flirtation with threadbare through-sung story lines and with avant-garde pretentiousness, in whose still waters the genre's greatest living practitioner, Stephen Sondheim, seems stranded. It is a return to narrative and to a moral universe, in which choice and chance are debated and dramatized in an atmosphere of ambiguities, mischief, and fun.

In his novel Doctorow speaks of "the lines of flow of American energy"; the musical charts the acceleration and exhaustion that defined our century's original momentum. It brings these new forces quite literally into play—the movement of machines, the movement of conveyor belts, the movement of capital, and even the movement of images which we now call motion pictures. As the audience enters the auditorium, it is greeted by two nineteenth-century stereopticons—a gigantic viewfinder above the stage and an actual, life-size one below it, isolated in a pin spot. This is the first cunning piece of musical generalship by the show's director, Frank Galati, who uses the stereopticon's technique of vivid outline and high relief as a way of translating Doctorow's historical intelligence and his prose style into a fluid, painterly style of his own. The play begins when The Little Boy (the savvy and effective Paul Franklin Dano) walks onstage and peers through the viewfinder at pictures of his suburban New Rochelle home. The stage direction reads, "The two images of the house on the scrim merge and leap into three-dimension!" And so the comfortable world of New Rochelle—"Ladies with parasols / Fellows with tennis

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS CALLIS

Members of the "Ragtime" cast in Toronto.

balls"—comes brilliantly alive, in a shifting kaleidoscope of imagery. But all the forces of the new age converge on this smug bastion of certainty and privilege and, in time, change forever the lives of the family: the dutiful Mother (the fine-voiced Marin Mazzie), who finds a black child buried alive in her garden and later adopts him, will learn about racial injustice; Mother's Younger Brother (Steven Sutcliffe), a taciturn sort, has an interest in fireworks which will end in anarchism; the sojourning Father (Mark Jacoby), who lives in an imperial patriotic fantasy of a never-changing America, will see his authority challenged and his world lost.

We are introduced to these opposing volatile energies in the Prologue, where, in Graciela Daniele's masterly choreography, the hubbub of the New World materializes before our eyes and is intercut with the New Rochelle family as swarms of Wasp, black, and immigrant Americans sweep around and between one another but never blend. The ebb and flow of these vectors of humanity suggests an entire social landscape. Daniele's choreography is a witty scenic shorthand, which works in collaboration with Eugene Lee's superb production design and the supple lighting of Jules Fisher and Peggy Eisenhauer. For instance, the immigrants' entry at Ellis Island is a chilling downstage march through a series of clanging gates. "Here in America / Anyone at all can succeed," sings Tateh (Peter Friedman), an immigrant artist who is selling silhouettes to support himself and his young daughter. "Do what you do, / And the world will come to you." As Tateh and the other immigrants sing this hymn to success, J. P. Morgan (Mike O'Carroll), a vision of entrepreneurial capitalism in a black cutaway, strides out onto a massive steel bridge above them. "Those buckets of immigrant sweat," he sings, "just might get you the whole U.S.!" The bridge proceeds to drop down and nearly crush the excited immigrants in their agitated hopefulness. If the ambiguity of the American dream—its thrill and its oppressiveness—ever had a more powerful musical-stage picture, I don't know it.

What the production ingeniously argues is that the two defining facts of American expansion are violence and the need for escape. The character of Houdini (Jim Corti) serves as a kind of metaphorical link between danger and distraction in American life. "If you're trapped / And failure seems imminent / Think of Houdini / That fabulous immigrant," he sings at one point; the second act actually opens with him and The Little Boy making a spectacular escape from a chained box. To get free is the century's essential struggle, and "Ragtime," whose title refers to the music that was itself an assertion of freedom, is full of distractions: vaudeville turns, sports, play worlds like Atlantic City—all of which serve as a release from the punishing fetters of labor and speed. The show makes a connection between the society's barbarity and its playfulness, revealing how denial is in fact part of the dream. The murder of the architect Stanford White, for example, turns into a show-stopping vaudeville, with White's inamorata Evelyn Nesbit (the delightful Lynnette Perry) swinging above a potbellied, masked patrician chorus that serves as the court. "He put me on a velvet swing / And made me wear . . . well . . . hardly anything!" she coos to them in "The Crime of the Century." With Tateh's help, Emma Goldman (Camille Saviola) organizes the famous violent strike at the textile mill in Lawrence, Massachusetts, where Tateh has got a job working sixty-four hours a week in deplorable conditions; later, an escape from violence engineers his salvation. He drags himself out of a police melee at the train station and onto a train that is taking his daughter and other strikers' children to safe harbor. To calm both his daughter and himself, Tateh produces some silhouettes he has drawn of her ice-skating. When he flicks the pages so that the silhouettes seem to move, the train conductor is captivated by the moving images and pays for the book: Tateh has stumbled onto motion pictures and into his calling as a film director.

Strangely, "Ragtime" has more power as a theatrical experience than as a musical one. The score serves the story well enough, but, unlike Doctorow, who is a student of history, the composer, Stephen Flaherty, and the lyricist, Lynn Ahrens, don't feel so confidently steeped in the details of the past, and sometimes the lyric choices seem generic rather than inspired. There's more insight about American society to be got out of the assembly line, moving pictures, Houdini, baseball, and even anarchism, than Ahrens' couplets have yet found. If more ideas can be packed into the lyrics as the show is fine-tuned, its sound will match its scenic brilliance. Ahrens is certainly capable of being lively and skeptical at the same time. "Even people who ain't too clever," Henry Ford sings, at one point, "can learn to tighten a nut forever."

The first act could also use a little tightening, but by the second act it's clear that the panoramic plot will center mostly on Coalhouse Walker, Jr. (Brian Stokes Mitchell), a pianist, who wants to claim his destiny as a free black man. "Sarah, it must be true," he sings to his beloved (the compelling Audra McDonald) in "Wheels of a Dream." "A country that lets a man like me / Own a car, raise a child, build a life with you." His Model T is vandalized by racists; and a large part of the action concerns his simple but vain search for justice. When Sarah, attempting to approach a Vice-Presidential candidate in the hope of arguing their case, is killed in a fracas, Coalhouse changes his calling from ragtime to revenge. He lays siege to J. P. Morgan's library to demand justice: the handing over of the vandal who disrespected him, or, at least, the repair of his car to its original condition. Booker T. Washington is imported to talk Coalhouse out of blowing up the famed library and into disbanding his group of renegade followers. He agrees. His followers go free; and he, having received the promise of a fair trial, walks out of the library into a hail of bullets. It's a fierce moment, made more powerful by Mr. Mitchell's cool intelligence. What remains is the play of silhouettes against the cyclorama—"a ghostly march of time" the stage directions call it—as characters emerge from the shadows to knit the various threads of their stories neatly together. The Little Boy cranks a movie projector, and the shadow play becomes at the finale a metaphor of history: a fleeting poetic outline that is all we can know of the past.

"Ragtime" is a work in progress; it will move to the Shubert Theatre, in Los Angeles, in June, and will arrive in New York next December, to open at the old Lyric Theatre, on Forty-second Street, which Drabinsky has bought and is refurbishing. By then, all being well, the first act should be refocussed; Flaherty and Ahrens will have had a chance to rework some of the score; and Doctorow will certainly have learned how to bow. ♦

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A CRITIC AT LARGE

PURLOINED LETTERS

Are we too quick to denounce plagiarism?

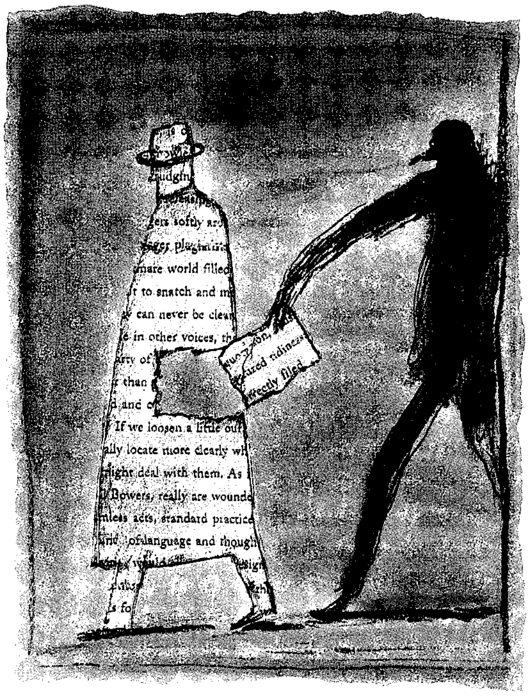
BY JAMES R. KINCAID

EARLY in 1992, Neal Bowers read a poem that carried with it a bouquet of familiarity—at first faint, and then strong, stronger, strongest. The poem, David Sumner's "Someone Forgotten," began like this:

He is too heavy and careless, my father,
always leaving me at rest-stops, coffee shops,
some wide spot in the road. I come out,
rubbing my hands on my pants or levitating
two foam cups of coffee, and I can't find him
anywhere, that beat-up Ford gone.

Bowers was struck by the resemblance of this poem to his own "Tenth-Year Elegy," published in *Poetry* a couple of years before. You be the judge:

Careless man, my father,
always leaving me at rest stops,
coffee shops, some wide spot in the road.
I come out, rubbing my hands on my pants
or levitating two foam cups of coffee,
and can't find him anywhere,
those banged-up fenders gone.



Beyond the title and the first few words, one is hard pressed to find differences. Sumner makes two additional changes in this stanza, both terrible: the insertion of an "I" in the penultimate line louses up the rhythm, and the substitution of the cliché "beat-up Ford" for the evocative "banged-up fenders" is a fool's amendment. As revisionist, Sumner is bungling; as plagiarist, immensely successful. Whatever the quality of his changes, the remarkable fact is that he makes hardly any. After altering the title and the first line, doubtless to escape detection by way of indexes, Sumner simply fiddles with the line breaks and every so often slaps down a synonym.

Bowers had the dizzying sense of looking into a mirror only to behold David Sumner. Still reeling, he soon caught up with Sumner, again and repeatedly, in a growing number of respectable poetry journals: Sumner's "My Careless Father," "My Forgetful Father," and "Father's Forgetfulness," for instance, were identical to "Someone Forgotten," which, you will recall, was just about identical to Bowers's "Tenth-Year Elegy." Sumner was, as it were, plagiarizing himself plagiarizing Bowers. Looking in other journals, Bowers found Sumner's "Aspects of Death," "Courtesies," and "The Visitor"—all copies of a poem by Bowers entitled "RSVP." Sumner—sometimes calling himself Diane Compton, but actually a man named David Jones—turns out to be a blazing human Xerox machine, who has published dozens of times in dozens of journals. In "Words for the Taking" (Norton; $17), Neal Bowers—a professor of English at Iowa State as well as a poet—describes how this stalker-copier ("my plagiarist") agitates the life of this victim-poet and

EUGÈNE MIHAESCO

somehow manages to evade the full light of justice. Bowers, employing both a lawyer and a detective, ended up with cringing letters from Jones but never his physical presence, much less retribution. All of this left Bowers considerably out of pocket, but with an elegantly written and compelling cry of outrage.

Sumner/Compton/Jones is a cheat, no doubt about it; and now and then we run across other cases of plagiarism that shut before they are open. For instance, one of my own students turned in a paper on "Great Expectations" which was an exact copy of Dorothy Van Ghent's essay—an essay so celebrated that I recognized it right off and, at the first opportunity, raised the issue with my student. "Shit!" she said. "I paid seventy-five dollars for that." It did seem a cruel turn of the screw to have term-paper companies selling plagiarized essays for students to plagiarize; but ethics are ethics, I told my student.

I could speak loftily on the subject because the ethical issues in her case were so clear-cut. They aren't always. When the story of Neal Bowers's plagiarist was picked up by the newspapers, Bowers was gratified to find that journalists viewed the offense with the same clarity that he did. "For them, plagiarism was not an occasion for philosophical maundering but for indignation and action," he writes. "Because their world is a pragmatic one built on facts, journalists see plagiarism for what it is—the theft of someone else's creative and intellectual property. Journalists who plagiarize are ruined."

Actually, what's plain is that newspaper editors tend to be as busy denouncing plagiarism as reporters, columnists, and bureau chiefs are committing it. Journalists, of course, often quote the same source: they use wire services, they use computer searches, they patch and scratch and snitch a little, and always have. Curiously, the denunciation of plagiarism gets louder as the practice gets closer. The *Columbia Journalism Review* examined twenty prominent and often lightly punished cases of journalistic plagiarism which surfaced between 1988 and 1995 and ranged from transporting twelve paragraphs from another's story for a fifteen-paragraph piece to stealing five paragraphs for a story on a plagiarized commencement address.

The most widely publicized of these cases was that of Ruth Shalit, whose youthful journalistic triumphs were mounting so fast that one had the feeling this was bound to happen: at least four plagiarism accusations within a year. Writing brilliantly for *The New Republic* and, later, for *GQ* and the *Times Magazine*, she fell into these scrapes, she says, through the windows on her computer: one window (her notes) opened too breezily onto another (her text). Journalists often seem to have difficulty knowing which window they've climbed in through or, once in, how to keep the words of others from shinnying up the trellis. Shalit's easy-access windows allowed sentences of a *National Journal* piece written by Peter Stone to appear virtually, but not entirely, unaltered in an essay she did for the *Times Magazine*. Here's Stone:

> He left to join the old-line Washington corporate law firm of Hogan & Hartson. But although Bennett spent five years at the firm, he never quite fit into its culture—partly because of his brash style and partly because of his budding interest in developing a white-collar criminal defense practice, something that Hogan & Hartson appeared to have little interest in.

Here's Shalit:

> He joined the old-line firm of Hogan & Hartson. He spent five years there but never quite fit into the culture, partly because of his boisterous style and partly because of his interest in developing a white-collar criminal defense practice, something that didn't seem to interest Hogan & Hartson.

"That's it? Salesman of the Month, August '87?"

Shalit tightens Stone's prose in ways that some might applaud if Shalit were an editor: "interest" is better than "budding interest" and "boisterous" says more than "brash." Such improvements do not, of course, constitute what most regard as thoroughgoing originality. But then journalism is less often a matter of thoroughgoing originality than it is a series of artful textual variations on stories with no clear point of origin—stories employing language that is boilerplate anyway. It's easy to imagine Neal Bowers's outrage when a work written to commemorate the tenth anniversary of his father's death is published as the work of another, and is mangled in the process. What's curious is that anyone should have professed similar indignation over what Shalit did. Can we not distinguish Shalit from Sumner? Is "budding interest in developing a white-collar criminal defense practice" a phrase, even without the buds, worthy of being declared "original"? Should we be marshalling our legal forces to protect it?

A KIND of workaday swapping of stories is common among reporters and correspondents—a swapping that sometimes extends to the way stories are structured, the major points of emphasis, key phrases, even sentences. This nonfelonious copying is especially evident among foreign correspondents, who, cast among strange peoples in other lands, seem to seek out the company of other foreign correspondents and their words.

Not so long ago, most of the major American papers covered a Protestant march in Londonderry—a march that had threatened a great deal of violence, because it had been planned to direct rabid Protestants along city walls overlooking the Catholic Bogside section. Last-minute compromises resulted in a different routing and little combat, but the coverage steamed forward all the same. This is how Shawn Pogatchnik, a reporter for the Associated Press—a wire service that provides bought-and-paid-for fodder for other journalists—summarized the situation in his second paragraph:

> The 15,000-strong Apprentice Boys, the pro-British Protestant fraternal order in this mostly Catholic town, decided not to face off with soldiers. Instead they marched through the predominantly Protestant east side of Londonderry.

Here, in order, are the second paragraphs written by Kevin Cullen, of the

Boston *Globe;* Fred Barbash, of the Washington *Post;* and Louis J. Salome, of the Atlanta *Journal-Constitution:*

> The Apprentice Boys, a Protestant fraternal organization, decided not to defy a British government decision that barred them from walking on a section of the city's 400-year-old walls overlooking the Bogside, a Catholic neighborhood.
>
> Some 15,000 members of a traditionalist Protestant fraternal order, the Apprentice Boys of Derry, paraded proudly if bitterly through the streets of this historic walled city as scheduled, but chose not to challenge a police blockade preventing them from passing close to a Catholic neighborhood.
>
> The Apprentice Boys of Derry chose not to challenge the blockade that prevented them from passing close to a Catholic neighborhood.

This is typical of the theme-and-variation techniques of the modern correspondent; and, once in a while, there is less variation than theme. Shawn Pogatchnik goes on to report on the troubles in the nearby town of Dunloy:

> But in the Catholic village of Dunloy, 35 miles east, residents cut down a tree to block a road, while police closed roads leading into town and fired plastic bullets to restore order. No serious injuries were reported.

And here is Louis J. Salome's version of this news:

> But in the Catholic village of Dunloy, 35 miles east, residents cut down a tree to block a road while police closed roads leading into town and fired plastic bullets to restore order. No serious injuries were reported.

Such word-by-word agreement certainly isn't culpable where a wire service is involved, and, in any event, seems little more than a signal of brisk workmanship.

Often, the language arranges itself in ways so trite and predictable that taking it in is hardly a conscious act. Honoring such language almost feels like saluting the cook of yesterday's oatmeal. If I write, "Plagiarism is indeed a complicated subject," have I originated anything at all? In Dickens's "Pickwick Papers," one Count Smorltork, the "famous foreigner" writing a book on England, mentions politics to Mr. Pickwick. Mr. Pickwick declares, "The word politics, sir, comprises, in itself, a difficult study of no inconsiderable magnitude." "Ah," says the Count, "ver good—fine words to begin a chapter. Chapter forty-seven. Poltics. The word poltic surprises by himself—"

The Count, like Ruth Shalit, is only improving things. What's clear is that not all plagiarisms are the same, nor is originality a simple concept. It's just that plagiarism is so important to us that we seldom think about it. Indeed, the word plagiarism comprises, in itself, a difficult study of no inconsiderable magnitude. As for defining it, we leave that to the officials—in this example, Northwestern University: "A conscientious writer always distinguishes clearly between what has been learned from others and what he or she is personally contributing to the reader's understanding." But how do I distinguish what I have "learned from others" from what I am "personally contributing"? If I subtract everything I have learned from others (including Mother?), what is left? Neal Bowers argues that scholars feel particularly anxious about the subject of plagiarism because of the "cumulative nature of scholarly work." He observes, "One person's research builds upon everyone else's, and footnotes don't always itemize the total debt. Virtually every scholar believes himself to have been plagiarized and, conversely, worries that his neighbors will find their work unattested in his." That's why even so outrageous a figure as David Jones can inspire in honest writers "feelings of vulnerability," of doubt concerning their own originality. Jones is, in fact, a nimble sociopath—a man who variously presented himself as living in Japan, as some other David Sumner, and as his own brother. Some of Bowers's colleagues seem worried that Jones is *their* brother.

BUT, no doubt because there's so much uncertainty around, fervent denunciations of plagiarists are popular: out-and-out plagiarists are criminals who safeguard the idea of originality they threaten, giving us conscience-clearing villains to hiss. They copy; we don't. Politicians are always popular targets: Joseph Biden, who apparently plagiarized even his acknowledgment of plagiarism; John F. Kennedy, whose "Ask not what" line was lifted from Oliver Wendell Holmes by way of Warren G. Harding; my own local congressman, who is given to saying that he is neither a borrower nor a lender. Two employees of the National Institutes of Health, Dr. Ned Feder and Walter Stewart, went as far as to devise a machine for divining plagiarism. The machine—actually a computer program—can scan any number of books and spot matches of thirty-character strings. Their first target, a historian, had already been cleared of the charge of plagiarism by the American Historical Association, and the zealous Feder and Stewart

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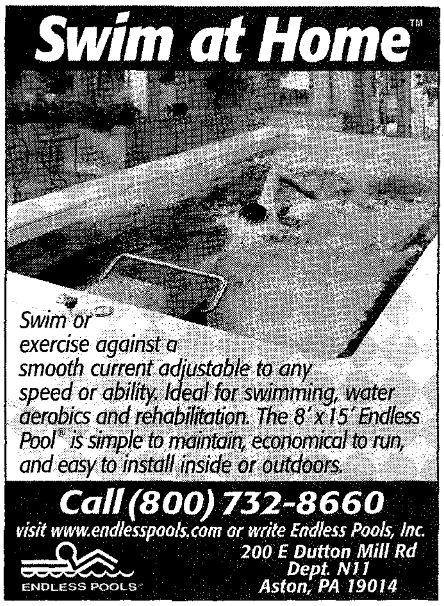

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were soon reassigned. But I expect that they took their detector with them.

Perhaps they should turn to the literary canon: the number of great writers who were plagiarists has often been noted. Shakespeare loved to poach words from his surprisingly limited sources, among them Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch: Volumnia's plea to her son, in "Coriolanus" (V, 3), is, Harry Levin says, "eloquently massive" but still "scarcely more than a metrical adaptation of North's prose." A little like Sumner, then, Shakespeare copied it out and rearranged it a bit, as one might do to refit a suit stolen from J. C. Penney. To Shakespeare could be added Montaigne, John Webster, Ben Jonson, Sterne, Dryden, Lessing, Diderot, Coleridge, De Quincey, Charles Reade, Plato, and thousands more. So many that we might start to wonder, as we compile our list, whether "plagiarism" has always meant what it now means to us.

JUST as we suspected, our idea of plagiarism is in fact local and of recent birth. "All men delight in imitations," Aristotle says, and in his time the matter to be imitated was common property. The idea that words, ideas, texts were originated privately was not honored much in the classical world, and many have said that it was meaningless to the medieval, where writing was connected not to personality but to a total coherence provided by God.

Coupling texts to authors was a slow process, which has been traced in a number of excellent studies, the best of them being Mark Rose's 1993 "Authors and Owners." Copyright, developing after Caxton's printing press got going, in the mid-fifteenth century, became the means by which the idea of "the author" and then "the originating author" could, by the late eighteenth century, take hold. At first, though, copyright was simply a way for the Crown to control the spread of seditious or heretical material, by granting a monopoly on printing to the Stationers' Company guild to censor and to settle disputes among printers concerning the piracy of texts. It wasn't until 1710, with the Statute of Anne, that England formally acknowledged the rights of authors, even in a limited way; and, gradually, throughout the century, the notion of "literary work" and "the author" took on the shapes that we recognize and therefore suppose to be natural and universal. The causes of such a massive shift—the rise of printing, Renaissance humanism, capitalism, democracy, individualism, Romanticism, you name it—are less my concern than the fact that it is all so recent and so jarring, so decidedly unnatural. Not only are "author" and "work" newfangled ideas but, it appears, there are still a few bugs in the system.

In modern dress, the work looks like a detached object, not part of a larger system of culture or religion or language. Writing is no longer a rhetorical act (teaching and delighting) but the manufacture of a product or the eruption of genius, pretty much the same thing in the eyes of the law. The product is property that can be owned and protected on behalf of its owner, the originator.

Not everyone supports such a notion, of course. T. S. Eliot took a dim view of it, and so did Goethe ("My work is the work of a collective being") and Roland Barthes ("It is language which speaks, not the author"). Helen Keller, upon being accused of plagiarism, answered, "It is certain that I cannot always distinguish my own thoughts from those I read, because what I read becomes the very substance and text of my mind."

Keller's insight is the cornerstone of structuralism: the mind is formed in and through language, not outside it. The Latin *plagiarius* refers to the kidnapping of slaves—a metaphor that was extended to the heisting of words by the Roman poet Martial, who evidently regarded himself as the master of his slave words. Structuralism argues that he has it the wrong way around. The mind does not claim language but is claimed by it and comes to an understanding only in reference to what language offers. "Poetry can only be made out of other poems; novels out of other novels," Northrop Frye declared in his "Anatomy of Criticism." Ridiculing Romantic notions of individuality and the copyright laws protecting those notions, Frye pointed out that it is illogical to think of an individual as "prior to his society"—that we, like poems, come into being within structures already in place, one of which is the structure of literary forms. This anti-Romantic tradition, denying originality, seems to theorize what Montaigne and John Webster practiced.

What is plagiarism in such a world? In Philip Roth's "Letting Go," one of his heroines, Libby, clears off the breakfast table, pulls out a yellow pad, and starts her career as a poet. Chewing the pencil for a bit, she writes, "Already with thee! Tender is the night." Further tries produce "The expense of spirit in a waste of shame," and so forth. Some poets, Frye would say, disguise things better than Libby, but, all in all, poems are made by piracy—and only trees can make a tree.

Still, the law lumbers on as if nothing more complicated than cattle rustling were involved. According to Oliver Wendell Holmes, the law protects that "something irreducible" in art, that "which is one man's alone," the distinctiveness that Holmes saw in every personality. The United States Constitution recognizes "the exclusive Right" of authors to their writings; the 1976 Copyright Act promises to protect "original works of authorship." The courts hold that phone books—or, at least, the white pages—do not imply a creator; a translation does. An idea is one thing, the law maintains, and the expression of it is another—and on and on, building legal castles on what literary theory warns is the quicksand of language. But the World Wide Web is likely to prove more of a threat to conventional notions of property than any pedigreed theorist. Who will police property in cyberspace, with words going who knows where and coming from who knows where, folding in on themselves, lawless and rootless?

Even educators may be learning how not just to punish but to employ plagiarism, or something very like it. Studying the ways in which languages are acquired and the ways in which we all develop facility within a language system, many literacy experts are rediscovering the power of copying. Copying, or imitating, they say, is vital to gaining initial entry into a discourse. The report that your fifth grader lifted from the encyclopedia, then, should not cause you such anguish. Nor should I worry overmuch that some of this very essay came from encyclopedialike sources. At any rate, you will need a good plagiarism machine to locate them, as I was not born last Thanksgiving.

What all of this suggests is that we might try to entertain the idea that plagiarism, and even originality, are relative concepts. Plagiarism is best understood not as a sharply defined operation, like beheading, but as a whole range of activities, more like cooking, which varies from deliberate poisoning to the school cafeteria to mother's own.

"The problem is originality and the difficulty of saying anything new," Bowers concedes. "To a great extent, all of us who write are simply repeating those who have written before us and, occasionally, duplicating one another." Nor is Bowers an exception. He tells us about wincing when he encountered a poem, by Mary Oliver, that seemed uncannily similar to one that he himself later published:

> I did not have a conscious thought about Mary Oliver or her work while drafting the poem. The claim is difficult to substantiate outside my own recollection, however, and if some literary detective should allege I cribbed most of my poem from Oliver, how could I possibly defend myself? Freshman composition students have been skewered with flimsier evidence.

Most of us will cede that absolutely pure "originality" is an over-the-rainbow idea; none of us invent the language we employ, our education, our culture, or our history. Most people would also agree that Shakespeare, though he copied now and then, is original anyway, compared with David Sumner or my student. If we can acknowledge that originality is relative, existing on a scale, then we may even grudgingly admit that plagiarism must also be. That would put us on the road to releasing some of our personal anxieties about getting caught with our fingers softly around someone else's pen.

The plagiarism proctor, after all, doesn't have it so good. He lives in a nightmare world filled with thieves or, worse, abductors. All his neighbors lie in wait to snatch and misuse, pollute and defile his words. Wash them as he will, they can never be clean again. He is sickened by the idea that he might invite other voices in, that his words might be a chorus, that writing might be a party of quotation, allusion, pastiche. His vision often seems to reach no further than secured tidiness: a padlocked library, with every word in its place, dusted and correctly filed.

If we loosen our grim clutch on purist ideas of originality, we may actually locate more clearly what kinds of copying do in fact offend and how we might deal with them. As it is, we not only do little to help those who, like Neal Bowers, really are wounded but get ourselves in a tizzy worrying about harmless acts, standard practice, unavoidable short trips into the common ground of language and thought. The authorities can take care of the few who cause pain. As for the David Joneses of the world, I say lock 'em up. As for the rest, who cares? I wouldn't want to be marooned on a desert island with a term-paper-company C.E.O. But Shakespeare would be agreeable, or Coleridge, or Count Smorltork. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

My Dark Places, by James Ellroy (Knopf; $25). Who was the Swarthy Man? Who was the Blonde? And who, really, was Jean Ellroy, the author's mother and the victim of a 1958 murder? The unsolved killing, with its parallels to the notorious Black Dahlia case, compelled Ellroy to write best-selling crime novels that obsessively re-created the Los Angeles that Jean Ellroy knew: squat bungalows, chain-link fences, drive-ins, seedy bars. Here, in a remarkable "L.A. Crime Memoir," the author transforms himself into a modern-day Jack Webb who retraces the initial fruitless investigation, the course of his mother's doomed life, and his own weird journey to reclaim her memory and find her killer.

Chasing the Sun: Dictionary Makers and the Dictionaries They Made, by Jonathon Green (Holt; $30). Though full of odd, surprising facts, such as that the first known dictionaries were cuneiform tablets that translated Sumerian into Akkadian, this first-rate history is not merely a compilation of trivia. It invites us to reflect on the ways in which, over the centuries, dictionaries have expressed the character both of their lexicographers and of the societies that produced them; for example, eighteenth-century English dictionary makers, influenced by the French, began to exclude terms that referred to sex or excretion, thereby inventing "dirty" words.

The Invisibles: A Tale of the Eunuchs of India, by Zia Jaffrey (Pantheon; $24). On a visit to Delhi, Jaffrey attended a wedding at which a troupe of men dressed in shabby saris suddenly appeared and began to chant obscene songs. She learned that they were eunuchs, who routinely turn up—without invitation—at weddings and in houses where there are newborns, and that, although eunuchs are rarely discussed, their existence is taken for granted all over India. Puzzled and curious, she began to investigate their lives, and her book is a triumph of humaneness, tact, and sympathy.

Taking Measures Across the American Landscape, by James Corner and Alex S. MacLean (Yale; $45). This is a visually stunning book of aerial photographs by MacLean, with accompanying essays and drawings by Corner. The authors call it "a rhetorical and speculative work that is intended to provoke thought about the making of the American landscape." The subjects of MacLean's photographs range from the shadow cast by Fajada Butte, in New Mexico, to a B-52 "boneyard" in Arizona, where bomber planes are destroyed in compliance with an international agreement. Corner's drawings, which have a cartographic beauty, seem at once to analyze MacLean's photographs and to heighten their chromatic density.

The Fire Fetched Down, by George Bradley (Knopf; $21). Despite an occasional borrowed intonation, Bradley is a suave and daring poet, multiple in his responses, whether to antiquity (Virgil, Horace) or to the postmodernist scene (the greenhouse effect, the whirl of the "Frug Macabre"). Of the present moment, yet aloof from it, he is naturally at home in a carapace of metre and rhyme but can be informal and hectoring at will, as in the lines "Life, if you're lucky, leaves / something to be desired."

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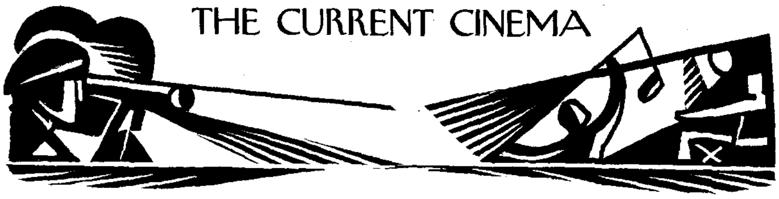


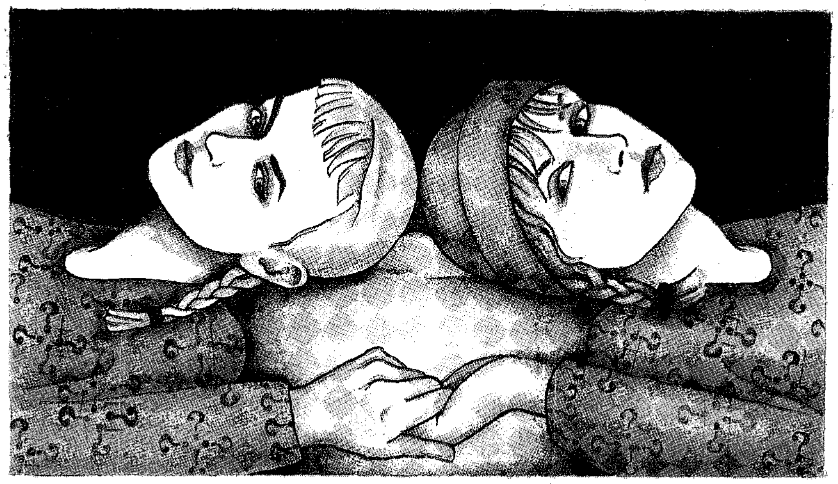
THE CURRENT CINEMA

HOUSECLEANING

Chabrol's rebel girls, and the heartfelt sisters in "Marvin's Room."

BY ANTHONY LANE

"LA CÉRÉMONIE" is about a French family named Lelièvre. They need a new maid, so Mme. Lelièvre (Jacqueline Bisset) interviews a young lady, finds her satisfactory, and takes her on at their place in the country. For a while, everything is dandy: the girl, Sophie (Sandrine Bonnaire), seems quiet and industrious, and, well, you know how hard it is to get good help these days. But things soon start to go awry, and there is all manner of unpleasantness, and M. Lelièvre (Jean-Pierre Cassel) *does* insist on keeping his stupid shotguns on the wall, where anyone can find them. . . . I'm not saying these people had it coming or anything, but this movie was directed by Claude Chabrol. What did they expect?



A burst of black wit: Sandrine Bonnaire and Isabelle Huppert as the maid and the postal worker who shed bourgeois blood in "La Cérémonie."

Ever since he made "Les Cousins," in 1959, Chabrol has, with prolific patience, been performing exploratory surgery on French life, in the confidence—the hope, even—that its ailments will never be cured. It is not always major surgery; Chabrol has more than a few duds to his name, and there are times in "La Cérémonie," which is adapted from a Ruth Rendell novel, when you can sense him simply going through the motions. But the motions themselves are immensely fluent and civilized, not least when people are about to embark on the kind of behavior which gives civilization a bad name. The tracking shots are guarded and stately; the camera draws away gently, as if taking a deep breath and preparing for action, so that you spend the whole film waiting for something, or somebody, to snap. Like most of the New Wave generation, Chabrol is a Hitchcock fan, but he has never made an exciting movie in his life; there is nothing weirder than to sit through "Le Boucher" and observe the unmasking of a killer who was barely masked in the first place. Chabrol trades in suspense, for sure, but what gets held back is the force of a loaded society.

His trigger woman in "La Cérémonie" is Isabelle Huppert, who has acquired the status of unofficial Chabrol muse: she was a poisoner in "Violette Nozière," a wartime abortionist in "Une Affaire de Femmes," and here she plays Chabrol's ultimate villain—Jeanne, the postal worker from Hell. The role offers Huppert a change of tone: she can do mousy, she can do shrewish, but now for the first time she has a chance to be plain ratty. Jeanne is like an overgrown teenager—angular and aggressively gauche, with a rebel streak that has darkened into menace. According to M. Lelièvre, she spends her days in the local post office opening his mail; he also knows that some years ago her child died in murky circumstances. Jeanne was acquitted of any wrongdoing, but that means nothing: in the Chabrol universe, malice and guilt bear only the most tenuous relation to due process of law. Whether you like "La Cérémonie"—no one could possibly warm to it, but it may get under your skin—depends on whether you believe in the friendship that swells between Jeanne and Sophie. Sophie, the more pliable of the two, has a buried past of her own, having been involved rather too closely in her father's death by fire. Small world, huh?

Together, this pretty pair stew themselves into resentment against Sophie's employers. To make matters easier, the Lelièvres are presented as ideal victims for the sacrifice; their refinement curdles into snobbery, and their treatment of Sophie stiffens with intolerance. She is illiterate, and sits in front of the television like a zombie; they curl up on the sofa to watch "Don Giovanni." In short, it's our old friend the leprous bourgeoisie—a species whose repression of the lower orders is said to be outclassed only by its own emotional constipation. I must admit that I tend to side with the bourgeoisie on this one: there's nothing intrinsically dictatorial about a little night music, and I suspect that Chabrol is every bit as cultivated as his fellow-*cinéastes*, if not more so. (He is reputed to be, among other things, a gourmet.) In France, of course, to chastise the middle classes does not disqualify one from their ranks; indeed, it is a proud mark of membership—a great bourgeois skill in its own right, you might say—and Chabrol's unflagging contempt has marked him as one of the most distinguished of practicing Flaubertians.

On the other hand, think of the movie that he made of "Madame Bovary," in 1991—home ground by any standard, and yet he left it looking frozen and infertile. Of late, something has drained out of his movies; they aren't half as suave as they once were, and "La Cérémonie" is dangerously joyless. If you're going to raise dead souls, at least make them sexy; when Chabrol filmed his wife, Stéphane Audran, in "La Femme Infidèle" and "Les Biches," her reserve was both blank and undeniably alluring. Apart from Virginie Ledoyen, who plays the daughter of the Lelièvre household, and who tempts the camera into some tenderly inquiring closeups, there's little about "La Cérémonie" that seems to turn the director on; even Sandrine Bonnaire stands around looking bony and shell-shocked. Four years ago, she starred in a six-hour movie as Joan of Arc, and even now I wonder if she made a full recovery. You sit there wanting to be hooked on her story, and Chabrol calmly shuts you out. And, as if the tone of the movie weren't discomforting enough, he chops at the structure to disturb its flow: plot strands are left dangling, conversations are skipped, and at one point the daughter helps Jeanne fix her car, even though I, for one, was convinced that the entire family was still on vacation.

So what is bugging Claude Chabrol? Has he decided that the pleasuring of an audience should now be declared a suspect device, along with marriage, capitalism, and cable TV? I felt a scaly, reptilian game being played by "La Cérémonie"; the damnable thing is that you still have to watch it, because naughty old Claude waits until the last moment—until the credits are rolling—before he pulls his big narrative twist. The climaxes of Chabrol movies are horribly commanding; you can see the violence heading your way, but what shocks you most—it's a kind of philosophical shock, a burst of black wit—is that the violent acts seem anything but climactic to their perpetrators. Murder, for instance, is casual but necessary, like old brandy at the end of a good meal. For Chabrol, no killers are natural born; we make them, and we shouldn't be surprised when they come to pay their compliments. "La Cérémonie" is politely mysterious in mood, but there is something obvious, almost naïve, in its conception: it wants to leave blood on our hands.

THERE is another dose of family problems in "Marvin's Room," a heartfelt, hemmed-in drama directed by Jerry Zaks. Whatever else you think of this movie, you can't deny that it's one serious pill-popper. Almost everybody seems to be sick, although it's the kind of film in which the people who really need help are those who are firm of body but troubled in spirit: people like Lee (Meryl Streep), a single mother who is struggling to get her act together—planning to get a cosmetology degree, for example—when the call comes from her long-estranged sister, Bessie (Diane Keaton), down in Florida. Bessie, who devotes her life to looking after their bedridden father, Marvin (Hume Cronyn), and semi-detached aunt (Gwen Verdon), is charity made flesh; the trouble is that the flesh is failing her. She has leukemia, and needs to see Lee again. She even needs to see Lee's seventeen-year-old son, Hank (Leonardo DiCaprio), although that sounds unlikely. Hank's idea of a warm family glow is to burn the house down.

Zaks's movie is adapted from a stage play by Scott McPherson, and it comes across like a piece of superior television. It's a healing-and-redemption package, and the one thing that lends it rigor and bulk is the presence of a heavyweight cast. If you can get Robert De Niro to deliver a comic turn as the absent-minded medic, Dr. Wally ("Where's my whatchamacallit?"), you can guarantee at least the illusion of substance. In fact, there's such a load of acting here, raining down from every angle, that I felt a slight urge to take cover; when a story is this frail, acting is pretty well all that's left. Keaton and Streep make sterling opponents, and they go to five sets: Streep reels off one of her down-market specials, all brass heart and chain-smoking, while Keaton's portrait of sagging middle age appears to lack makeup, vanity, and all the traditional trimmings of a lead performance. It's so selfless you don't quite know where to look. The most balanced work comes from DiCaprio, who is becoming a sort of elongated Jimmy Dean; he uses his lankiness beautifully, sending out that true adolescent rage at being the wrong shape for the world. His rapport with Keaton is the sharpest thing in a hazy, wandering film, and I wish he had more to chew on. Heaven knows we are overburdened with action movies, but the plot of "Marvin's Room," which peaks on the question of whether or not Hank will inherit his grandfather's toolbox, suggests that it is still possible to go too far in the other direction. ♦

SHOUTS & MURMURS

DISHING IT OUT

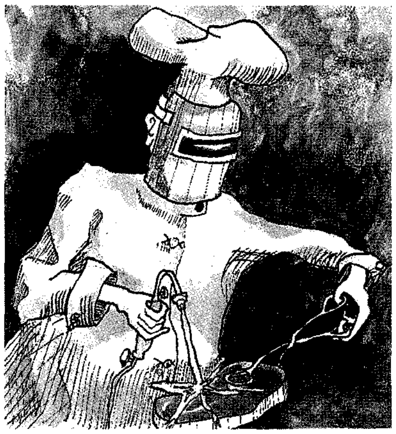
BY BRUCE McCALL

GAILY overstuffed bouquets of fresh-cut dollar bills, framed Picasso and Duchamp checks hanging on the wall, menu prices quoted on the Paris Bourse: **L'INCOME**, restaurant nonpareil, where even our busboy, a suave Continental named Kurt, carried a cell phone. We began with the feathery, nutmeg-hued Brittany wood chips on a bed of stream-washed pebbles and found them ever so slightly gritty. Then on to the main course and pride of the kitchen: *gaga*—the Algerian half-rémoulade, half-bouillabaisse, half-haunch of baby jackal, all trussed up mummylike in tender gray leaves (tobacco? viburnum?) and served *sans* plate. A too stingy daub of that tangy, turpentine-touched *sauce dromadaire*, perhaps, but we departed L'Income as we always depart L'Income, aglow in the gladsome feeling that our tongue had just thrown a party for our mouth.

SLAUGHTERHOUSE SIX. Our waitperson—none other than the erstwhile busboy Kurt—put us immediately at ease by coldcocking the noisy guest at the adjoining table in this working abattoir cum trendy new hangout where fashion models and ham-radio operators mingle till the wee hours. We chose the Beef Vulcan and soon regretted it. What should have been lightly blowtorched and set aside to heal came swabbed in a thick, waxy residue, the telltale sign of a hasty napalming. Kurt was madder than we were, and offered to cuff the chef about, but dessert, a divinely molar-cracking ingot of sugared gristle with just a hint of licorice, redeemed Slaughterhouse Six.

Curried baby-grasshopper hearts in a caramel glaze, served floating in a tiny tub of bubbling-hot tap water, is both the best and the only dish on the menu at **DJIT**, the bustling new midtown celebration of tantalizingly unidentifiable ethnic cuisine (there is no menu, and speaking is not allowed), where a twinkle-toed waitstaff kicks your meal to you as you squat on the floor. Still, they managed to mix up our orders. Where was Kurt when we needed him?

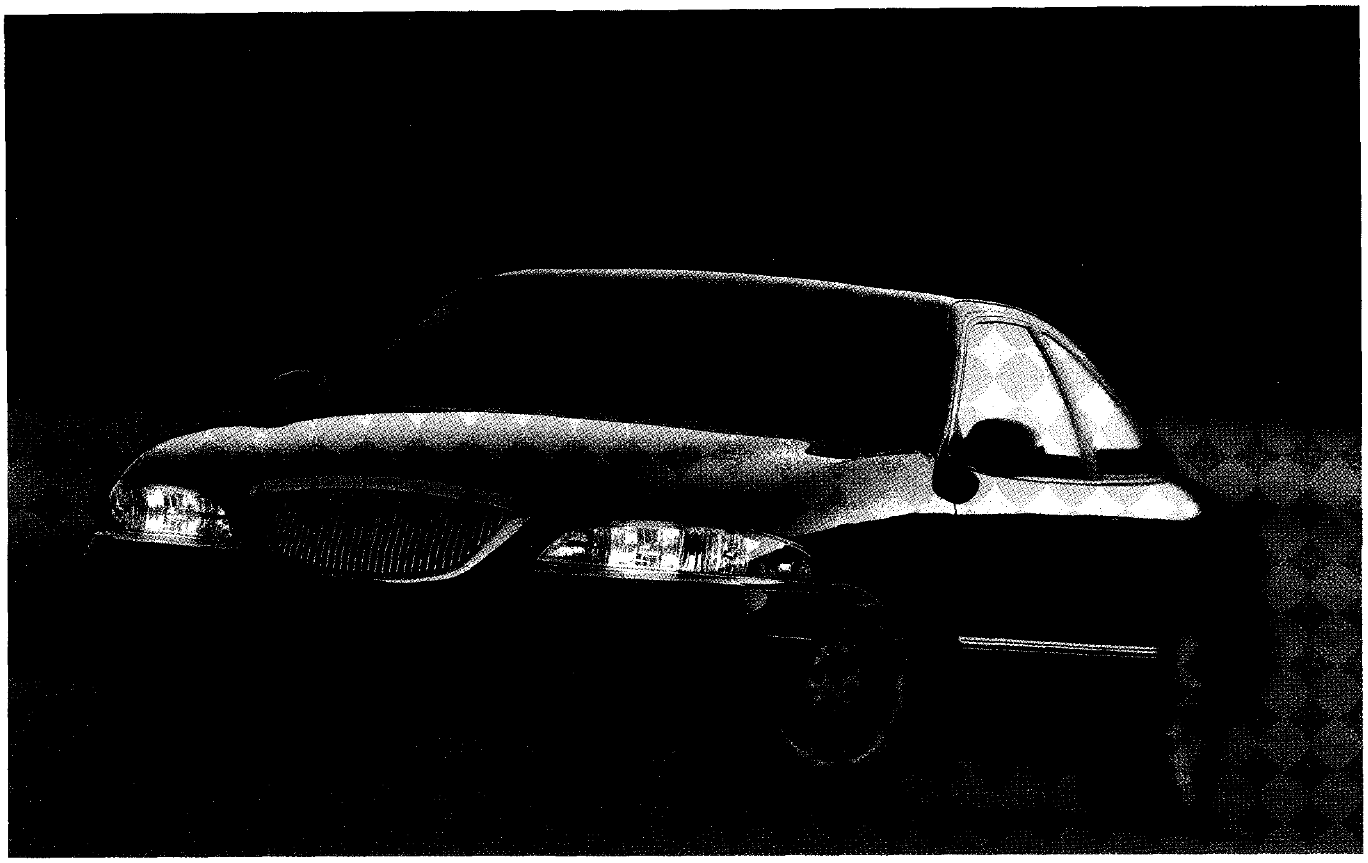
Who should rush forth to greet us at **KUNG FU** but its new maître d', Kurt, whisking us to a corner banquette and cuddling in our lap while extolling the sixty-four varieties of candied turbot on the menu. We essayed them all, and, except for No. 34 and No. 49—the former too chewy, the latter not chewy enough—we were transported. When we requested that Kurt convey our compliments to the chef, he replied "What chef?" and tore up our bill.



The new owner of **DOLDRUMS**, the hyperattentive and ultracharming Kurt, kissed us on both cheeks, the forehead, the neck, the shoulders, and the lips with an enthusiasm that aptly symbolizes both the zest for life and the love of earthly pleasures radiating from this *boîte intime* deep in the New Jersey marshlands. The cuisine—"*echt* Americana," quips the boyishly self-kidding Kurt—includes a sumptuously overflowing bowl of cornflakes and a peanut-butter sandwich done on bread soft as goose down and white as snow. Talking the night away with exciting companions steals the appetite, and we only sipped our Wild Turkey while gobbling peanuts at the bar—but we'll be back!

NANOOK. An experiment in Inuit cuisine can easily go awry—blubber tartare requires a surgeon's touch if it is to skirt the twin pitfalls of trichinosis and salmonella—but if anyone is up to the challenge it is fast-rising restaurateur and host of hosts Kurt. The man responsible for Doldrums, Riboflavin II, Terre Haute, and now this brilliantly stark, igloolike room clearly can do no wrong. Even a simple, unflavored icicle apéritif becomes a stalactite of tongue-numbing purity well worth its sixteen-dollar price tag in the hands of this gustatory Merlin, and the Eskimo Pie dessert—all flaky slabs of milk chocolate, sliding like so many tiny tectonic plates over a vanilla-flavored iceberg that melts on the palate—was a model of consistency, tasting exactly the same on our fourteenth visit as on our first.

The conscientious critic is ever torn between forgoing a review altogether and venting true feeling when faced with the dilemma of a clip joint as dismally grotesque in every regard as **KURT'S**. We found the atmosphere as cold as the staff—although warmer than the Army K rations eventually slung on our table. Blame lies solely on the pomaded head of the proprietor, who avoided making eye contact all evening while fussing over other diners with smarmy bonhomie, and who was far too busy chatting up a Eurotrash minx at the bar to acknowledge our note inviting him to join us for a drink. Restaurant proprietors must be taught that they cannot shamelessly seduce customers only to toss them aside like yesterday's mussel shells when their fickle palate craves a superficially more enticing dish—and this oversized walnut-handled steak knife, hefty in the hand but razor-sharp to the touch, will do just fine. ♦



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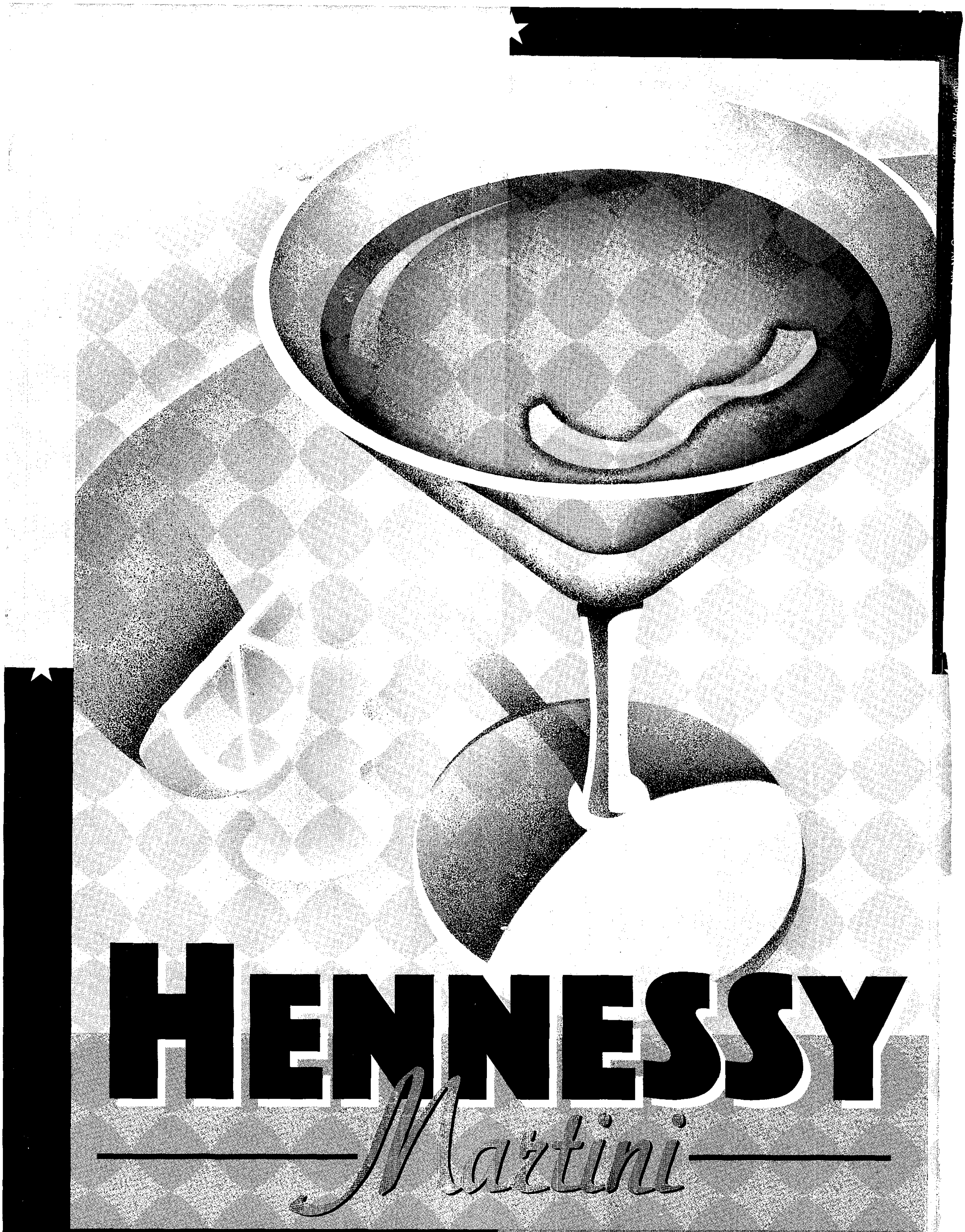
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